

/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

WINTER ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

JANUARY 1993

OCCASION: Thirty-Third Annual Dinner Meeting of the Historical Society of Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian Church, NE corner of the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Feb. 27 1993 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the church, \$6.00 each. Please reserve by check sent to Maurice Keith, 773 E. County Rd. 200 N, Greensburg. Deadline is the evening of Feb. 24th.

PROGRAM: "George Rogers Clark-Triumph to Tragedy".

George Rogers Clark, more likely than not, was the saviour of the American Revolution. His success came early and for most of his life he fought critics, politicians, and creditors. His life was the epitome of F. Scott Fitzgerald's statement: "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy".

Joe Westhafer will be the speaker, and Joe always puts on a good show. The meal will, no doubt, be out of this world. There will be a short business meeting, if you should have any suggestions as to improving the Society, bring them with you. This will be a great meeting, reserve early and avoid the crowd. Oh yes, bring a little extra cash to pay those dues.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paul Somers

LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Steven Stradley

FALL MEETING was held at the Local REMC with about twenty-five of the faithful in attendance. The program consisted of a slide presentation of Indiana Art Work narrated by Herb Scheidler. The art work included paintings, quilts, coverlets, glass & photographs. Dorothy Petty presented the Society with the minutes of the Evangelical United Brethren of Decatur & Ripley Countys circuit meetings from 1860-1892. Paul Somers, upon whose property stands the center of population monument, discussed the up-keep of said monument, wondering if the state or county could provide such. Hand made cookies and drinks were served, quite good cookies.

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ABOUT SMILEY FOWLER'S  
"SPEED SENSATIONS"

In Westport, one Sunday afternoon, I and some others while hunting through an auto junk yard was an antique car (a Winton I believe) that had a friction clutch with a leather covered disk on the fly-wheel and a leather covered rod to the drive shaft. The rod was at right angles to axis of the disk. A short length of rod pressed against the disk and could be moved up and down passing the exact center of the disk. Below this center the rod would be rotated to transmit a forward motion to the drive. The lower it was the more rapid the drive. Above the center the transmission was reversed. As the rod passed the disk center a short bit the rod was sprung away to make the drive neutral. I do not know if the engine was crosswise under the seat. Some antique cars were, and I don't know how the drive rod was connected to the drive shaft and to the rear axel. But surely it was only one of a kind.

(From a letter written by: Phil Deiwert)

ARE YOU A WITCH ?

Chances are in about 1 to 10 you may be a water witch, sometimes called dowsing, devining or rod walking.

The art of water witching goes back to the fifteenth century with hundreds of articles on the subject. The technique has not changed. The practitioner takes a forked branch of live wood (almost any kind) with a butt end; he grasps the end of the branches with his palms up, points the butt end up, bends the branches apart somewhat and walks to and fro to find a spot at which the butt end will describe an arc of 180 degrees and points to the ground. With this forked branch one will be able to locate under ground streams and estimate its depth.

Also I have been able to find field tile by bending two pieces of wire at a right angle and pointing the wires straight ahead, and when you get over the tile the wires will cross and be parallel with the tile.

Will it work ? If you have the power, the rod twists with a measurable force, strong enough to peel the bark off the rod and the skin off ones hand.

What is the feeling like ? If you are carrying a flexible cane fishing pole across a given area and suddenly the pole bends toward the ground - about like the pull of a half-pound bluegill. Pass the spot and the pole straightens up again.

When we were getting a water well dug a few years ago, the driller ask if the location has been witched? I said "no," and he said to make sure we find water he will witch it. Taking his pocket knife, he cut a branch from a maple tree in the front yard, and soon found where two underground streams crossed.

He told me to try and sure enough it worked for me and the strongest pull was where he had marked the spot. Others tried with no sucess. Then the driller said, "sometimes it works if we join hands". He was right as long as the inside hands were joined and each person held one branch of the rod with his outside hand the "non-witch" was a witch and got full power.

Why does the rod move ? Is it because of unconscious muscular activity, or mind reading feats? Is it like the fact that a magnet will make a piece of iron jump through air - but not a piece of copper? Is it like the fact that the homing pigeon will find its home? Perhaps someday, someone will be able to answer these questions. Yet witching remains a mystery today as it was years ago.

There are a few professional water witches in this county today and for a fee will come out and witch your well site.

EXCERPTS FROM OSCAR MILLER'S MEMOIRS

Speaking at Clarksburg

The next speech that I made was in company with William Goddard, who was the father of John W. Goddard. Those two men had been living in Washington, D.C., holding down good, fat offices while James C. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur were in office; but the election of Grover Cleveland had caused them to pack their trunks and come home to Greensburg. Mr. William Goddard and I were billed to speak at a Republican rally at the town of Clarksburg on Monday evening, October 29, 1888. I think that was the date. Mr. Goddard was a very tall man and wore a broadcloth Prince Albert coat and was a very fine looking gentleman of the old school of politicians. He had been in Washington, D.C., and had elbowed around with statesmen from all parts of the nation until he had acquired the tastes and gentility of Washington society. He did not wear a plug hat on our trip to Clarksburg, but when he was in Washington, I imagine he may have worn one on state and exclusive occasions. If he did, he certainly must have been a very striking figure when he went out to dine with other dignitaries at the famous DelMonico. He told me that the DelMonico was the finest eating establishment in Washington at the time. He was a very fine fellow to be with. Of course, he was considerably older than I was; and while there was quite a difference in our ages, I enjoyed his company exceedingly.

We drove up to the town in a buggy, and when we arrived they gave us a real fine reception. The improvised Clarksburg Band, which was largely composed of drums, big and little, and fifes, made plenty of noise. Everyone appeared to be happy and enjoying the occasion. When we went into the big school building, we were greeted by a large audience. We were also honored by the presence of quite a number of ladies. I do not now remember who the chairman was, but there was one man who was much in evidence, who busied himself by running about seating and taking care of the crowd in general. He proved to be Jeff Davis, who afterwards became sheriff of the county. When the audience quieted down, the chairman then made a few introductory remarks. He then introduced me to make the opening speech.

I started my speech by saying that I was unusually honored by being called out to make the first talk of the evening when I was in company with the eloquent and distinguished Mr. William Goddard, who had spent some years in the capitol city of Washington. I am quite sure the reason is that the honorable chairman desires to "keep the good wine for the last."

I had the theme of my speech pretty well committed. I said, "We hear a great deal about the tariff here lately. Not long ago I heard about a couple of fellows who were out hunting. They came up out of the woods and came to a railroad track. They were not used to railroads. They stood there a short time. Soon a Lightning Express came whizzing by. They stood in astonishment. When they had recovered from the exciting shock, one of them said, 'Bill, I bet you that was the Tarriff.'" The audience was kind enough to laugh at this anecdote and give me a due amount of applause.

I then said, "I now want to talk for a while about this protective tariff. I also want to talk about the miserable condition we have been brought into under the free trade fallacy as administered in Washington under Grover Cleveland." I then proceeded to a full argument, relating to the effects of free trade and its destructive tendency when applied to the business of the country, also the beneficent results that had been brought about by the high protective tariff as administered by the Republicans.

I must have consumed about one-half hour in discussing these issues somewhat in detail. I closed my talk by saying: "My dear folks, this matter will be very gloriously adjusted when we go to the polls in November. We will elect that great statesman from Indiana, the Honorable Benjamin Harrison." The mention of this man's name brought great and continued applause.

The chairman then stepped forward and said, "I now have the very great pleasure of introducing Hon. William Goddard of Greensburg, who will address you." Mr. Goddard stepped forward and was greeted with considerable applause. He was a very good speaker and deliberative in his opening remarks. After he got started, he spoke with more vim and made his points very good and effective. He also spoke considerably about the good results of the protective tariff. He said that the Democrats had changed their position several times in reference to the tariff. He said in the first place they had declared in favor of free trade, then at the next election they declared themselves in favor of tariff for revenue only, and now they had come back to their first love and declared for free trade. In fact, you couldn't tell just where they were. He said they put him in mind of a quack doctor he once heard of, who was explaining about food and how it went from the mouth to the stomach. This doctor said that all solid food went from the mouth into the throat where it struck a lid and then went on down on that side of this lid; and when liquids such as milk or coffee struck this lid, it raised and allowed the liquids to go down on the other side, thus separating the liquids from solid food. Someone who had been listening to this quack spoke up and said, "I think that in eating mush and milk, it certainly would make a hell of a lot of flipping and flopping." Goddard then said that was the way of the Democrats - they changed their minds so often that it did produce a lot of flipping and flopping, and it was hard to tell just where they would flop to in the next election. He said, "At present, as Mr. Miller has explained to you, they have got back and now declare themselves in favor of complete free trade. Now if Grover Cleveland gets back again into power, it is hard to tell what a mess he may make of it, or how much flipping and flopping may go on."

Mr. Goddard made a very fine speech and talked about one hour. He carried the attention of his audience with interest and attention. When we returned to Greensburg the chairman said he was quite well pleased from the reports of the meeting that he had received from some people who were there. He also told us that the committee wanted us to go down to the town of Westport on the following Tuesday, which would be October 30, 1888.

The campaign was now considerably advanced, and the Republicans were wanting to lose no time or leave no stone unturned in order to carry the oncoming election. Mr. Goddard was also very much interested in the results, as I think he wanted to get back to Washington, the city he had grown to like very much. Mr. Goddard and I talked the matter over, and we consented to go. At once large posters were put up, and the meeting was duly announced. I think that my friend, James Kennedy, the county auditor, was also much interested in the results, as he wanted to control that office for another four year term. He told me he had a very valuable political henchman down there in that "neck of the woods" who could do him a lot of good. He said his name was Jap Patterson, who carried about 50 votes around in his vest pocket, and he wanted to encourage him by having a lively meeting down in that vicinity.

When Mr. Goddard and I arrived down there, the town was pretty well filled up by people who had driven in from the hills and farms of Jackson and Sandcreek Townships. There were no saloons in the town, but from the way some of the boys acted, I concluded that they must have had a little liquer that had been saved over from the Democratic rally of the previous week. There was considerable enthusiasm by the crowd. The Westport band rendered a few pieces that from the point of volume much outclassed the harmony of music.

I will not attempt to go into full details of this meeting. It was much the same as the one at Clarksburg, Mr. Goddard was at his best, and aquitted himself very handsomely. He was a very imposing figure as he stood straight up in his long Prince Albert coat, made of fine broadcloth. He was fully six feet tall. He was also a good speaker. I thought as he prodeed that he improved in telling his mush and milk and flip-flop anecdote. He talked about an hour, and I thought was rather effective. I wound up the meeting by talking about one-half hour; and as no one walked out on me, I thought the crowd received my argument with considerable interest. I talked nearly altogether about the tariff, which was the main issue of the campaign. I prefaced my talk with some reference to the great achievements of Governor Benjamin Harrison, who would soon be our next president. The name of Harrison always brought forth a vigorous applause. We met a lot of people, and as we went home, we felt the meeting had had some good effect, and we congratulated ourselves by the great enthusiasm displayed by the people who were there.

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From: "I Remember" by: Elizabeth Robbins Davis

#### MY FIRST HOME

I remember my first home, where I was born, as a four room, partly log structure. The rooms were kitchen, summer-kitchen, living room, and a spare room.

Our nicest room was this "spare room" at the southwest side of the house. It had a nice rag carpet, curtains, a company bed with nice white spread, a tall desk, an organ, a horsehair covered settee with two matching chairs. From the ceiling was suspended a bead basket...all color beads...and all lengths and sizes.... a beautiful thing, a gift from the Ballieu relatives in LA. This room faced west, with a door and a walk leading to a gate in the

picket fence.

North of the spare room was the living room, also facing west with a door and a walk leading to the gate. Here was an enormous fireplace on the north; beds in the south west and south east corners of the room. One was a "little bed", we called it, and we children slept in it. If we were afraid in the night there was always the chance to cross the room and crawl in with Ma and Pa and scoot down to the foot of the bed and feel so secure. A small square table stood under a window in the northwest corner. There was a big closet on each side of the fireplace, and a place to pile up firewood. On the northeast side stood a bureau, the one Faith has now. In one drawer was kept asaphoedita, from which to make bags to wear around our necks to keep away disease. I don't think my folks ever believed it would, but it was the custom. Directly in the corner was the gun that my father used to kill hogs, and to fire off on the 4th of July and sometimes Christmas. I would get my head covered when I knew he was going to use it, and then maybe pull the covers down at the exact time it went off...a "scared-cat"!

This living room also had a rag carpet. In the winter my mother tore rags for carpets, and in the spring they were sent to the old weaver, Mrs. Lucky, for weaving. Then Mother would remove the tacks and take out the old carpet for a good beating, later using it in the kitchen. Fresh straw went on the floor, then the new carpet was tacked down. She would also put new straw into the straw ticks under the feather beds, so that we could hardly climb in at night. Lots of people had bugs in their beds, but we never did at our house.

The other rooms on the north east side were the summer-kitchen and a winter kitchen, with cook stove, eating table, cupboards for dishes and pots and pans, a place for a wash pan (or bath), and a bucket of water ready.

There were some smaller buildings outside, the wood house, the milk house, with a cement trough for cool water, so that crocks of milk could be set in and kept cool and sweet, till ready to skim and churn for butter to use and sell. There was a good sized barn, mostly log, in which to keep livestock and tools. There was an enormous box we called the granary, and, risking a good scolding, we would climb in it and play.

For recreation, there was a sand pile, a sliding board, (just a wide board leaned against the board fence, which we wore slick at the expense of our shoe soles and the seats of our pants.) There was plenty of room to run and play, a big apple orchard, cherries to pick, gooseberries, etc. A lane lead to a small pond where we and the pigs liked to play, where one day Cordia and I were walking around the edge and I slipped in. Cordia pulled me out by the hair of my head, and Mother scolded her, because I was five years younger than she, and she should have taken care of me, (so Mother said).

It was the custom for every child to have her ears pierced. So, when I was five years old, I was persuaded to let Mother pierce mine. The process was to rub the lower part of the ear

until it was numb, then to put a ball of white yarn back of the ear, and using a small sharp needle (which had been sterilized over a candle flame), threaded with white silk thread, gently put the needle through the ear, pulling the thread through and tying it under the ear. This thread was left until the hole healed, pulling it back and forth often so the hole in the ear would not grow up. Mother got one pierced; but then I decided I didn't want the other done, as it did hurt some, which I had been told it wouldn't, so I ran up the lane and it took lots of coaxing to get me back. ....and the promise of gold earrings very soon. The next Christmas I did get the earrings, gold, in blue cotton in a little blue trunk, and wore them many years.

I think we were pretty healthy, as a rule, but some times would have to have a doctor. Dr. Burroughs came to our home when needed. I remember once...I must have been sort of delirious, as the bed I was in kept going up nearly to the ceiling (so I thought), and I couldn't keep the medicine down...that Dr. Burroughs called for two flat irons. He put one on his lap, upside down, put a few drops of something made of flour and water on it, then a few drops of medicine, then more of the paste, and set the other iron, heated now, on the first, making a wafer. I was supposed to swallow that but I couldn't, even slick as it was. Dr. Burroughs would put his horse in the barn and stay all night with the patient. If anyone needed him they would come on horseback to find him. If we had "lung fever", as a last resort he would make a big fly blister...using a fly from South America...ground up and applied as a poultice on the chest. The skin would raise in a blister and the fever would go down, if the patient was still alive.

Many memories throng me as I write...of the old goose that laid eggs in the tanzy bed and flopped me if I went too near; of one pet dog, a white one named Curly; of Old Pidey who kicked me across the stable and knocked me unconscious, thinking I was the dog come to pull her tail; of relatives come visiting, and one little girl dropping my doll and breaking her; of a baby in a white casket wearing a white dress with blue bows down the front (a little sister who only lived five days) and my Mother crying so; but enough for now.

\* \* \* \* \* MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.  
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00  
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## MEMORIALS

In Memory of

## Comments

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/THE BULLETIN/  
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

FALL ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

OCTOBER 1993

OCCASION: Fall Meeting

PLACE: Meeting Room of the new County Library.

DATE: Sunday, Oct. 24, 1993 at 2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: The program will be one which was postponed some time ago. Don Marlin will show & discuss some views of the area taken back in the 1920s by the Beck Studio which, at one time operated on West Main St. Like to encourage every one to bring an old Photograph to display at the meeting. The Society would like to make slides of old pictures to add to the Museum collection. Dr. Marlin, a local product, suggested this, & has done the photographic work. Don't miss this.

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LAST MEETING was the Summer Meeting held at the Westport Covered Bridge with around 50 members and guest in attendance. John Barthold, president of the Historic Covered Bridge Society, gave a talk about the covered bridges of Indiana. Bob Conwell, director of the local Society, gave a short talk dedicating the bronze plaque which was donated by the local Society. After the program a fine social hour was enjoyed by every one at the Conwell home in Westport eating homemade ice cream. A fine afternoon entertainment put on by Mr. & Mrs. Conwell.

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300 More Christmas Ornaments are now available. If you or anyone desires one, contact Pat Smith or any director of the organization. There, definitely, will be no more produced. So hurry, hurry.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Great Big Thank You to Earl Vanderbur, the tree cutter, for his cutting & disposal of the practically dead tree in front of the Museum. It was quite a big job.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bill Fisher  
Beverly Ferris  
Jennifer McNealy  
Pansy Cummins  
Ethel Hastings  
Richard Conwell - Indianapolis

The Society would also like to recognize & thank all the helpers who took care of the Museum during the past season. Especially Maxine Clemons who was in charge of obtaining the helpers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Victorian Dress is needed for display. If you have one, and would like to donate it to the Museum, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Don McKinney  
Mrs. Clarence W. (Amanda) Mitchell

DONATION

Helen McCord (Mrs. William)

MEMORIAL

In memory of Helen B. Marlin from Van P. Batterton.

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Remember, DUES.

Last call for payment of this year's DUES. If you have forgotten this important aspect of belonging to the Society, the Secretary will be glad to help you, thank you.

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Wanted: Home in the country for a good boy, age 16 and willing to work.. Inquire at SATURDAY REVIEW.

I've volunteered to write for each bulletin if space allows. I hope, however, that there isn't enough space each time because it would be more interesting if more members would write something from time to time.

For example, all out of county members could write a bit about where they now live. Hanna Brown, Yuma, AZ, could write a piece about Yuma, Earl Barker would write about Waldron, Kathryn Abrell about Tampa, Mrs. Dierksmeier about Lake Mills, WI, Harriett Woodfill-Neuse about Rosharon, TX, A. A. Rousseau about Seattle, Mary Farmer Roemer about Montgomery, AL, and so on and on until we have heard at least once from each out of county member.

Although we are the Decatur Co. Historical Society it would be interesting to most members to learn something about the area where other members now reside. There are many out of county members and if each would write even two or three paragraphs it would be extra special for all of us.

Decatur Co. residents could write about a particular spot, incident or memory of our county. Looking over the list of members it's easy to see how many sections of the county are represented and each member has a story that the rest of us would enjoy.

Oh sure, many of you say "Oh I can't write," but YES YOU CAN. We want to hear it the way only YOU can tell it. It would lose something if it were written in a professional, slick magazine type style if that isn't the way you usually speak or write. Or if you normally speak or write in the slick magazine style that's just fine too. You could do as I do and just write like you talk. No one has arrested me yet for using a wrong word though some might like to for using too many words.

One more thing before beginning the story for this Bulletin - So many of you aren't paying your dues which will cause you to stop receiving the Bulletin. Then if you don't get the bulletin you aren't reminded that the dues are due. I doubt the \$5.00 per year dues holds you back. I suspect that it's just one of those things you mean to do but don't get around doing. Van puts a reminder in the Bulletin but still it isn't like a statement we get in the mail that has to be paid by a certain date. What's say we all pay in Dec. or Jan. and the last Bulletin of the year will remind us to do so?

Now the story - well almost - first I wanted to write about writers from our county, then changed my mind and wanted to write about an early medical organization with some great stories of what they were doing back then in curing people, then again changed my mind and decided to write about an old scrapbook Van and I found when we dug about in a museum cabinet. We found some marvelous stuff. First item: a certificate for the Greensburg and Milroy Turnpike Co. Mr. Riley owned 12 shares of the Capital Stock, dated Dec. 12, 1868. The certificate was No. 38 and signed by A. J. Draper and J. H. Stewart.

Second item: A will of Arthur Galbraith dated 1802. The state of origin appears (I have a problem reading the old English and it is quite faded) to be Tennessee, (if so, it is mis-spelled) and the county of Hankins. I base that on the fact that in 1802 there were only 16 states. Narrowing that down to what it could be, judging from the letters, only Georgia and Tennessee seems to be reasonable. You just might know for sure.

Arthur left everything to his son John and part of the estate was a negro woman named Patt, one named Minny, one negro girl named Sarah. The will was signed in the presence of John Long and James Loper and it was registered on July 28, 1818. It

is in the extreme delicate condition you would expect of a hundred ninety one year old paper. We're going to do something to protect them for the future.

Third item: The oldest piece of job printing printed in Greensburg by John Thomson editor of the Indiana Repository established in 1835. It states, "Greensburg, Ia. July, 6th, 1837. The undersigned present this token of regard to Mr. A. R. Forsythe. He will please accept our thanks and the respects of the students of the Seminary, for the efficient part he took in the musical performance during their celebration of yesterday, signed Mr. A. E. Whitworth, Instructor, James G. May, Principal, Decatur County Seminary."

Fourth item: Certificates for "The Adams Express Company, a Joint Stock Association, under the laws of the State of New York. Stockholders Individually Liable." One of these is dated Aug. 26, 1858 - amount of \$500, and was issued by the Greensburg Agency to John R. Donnell.

Fifth item: Local passenger tariff list from the Vernon, Greensburg and Rushville Railroad in 1880. From Letts Corner to Greensburg was .45 - from Letts to Horace was .20 - from Sardinia to Greensburg .70 - from Westport to Letts was .25 but if you wanted to come to Greensburg from Westport it was .60. The agent would reduce the rate .10 if the passenger purchased the ticket before entering the cars. Children over 5 and under 12 rode for half-fare but  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents would be added when necessary to make the rate terminate in 0 or 5.

Five items doesn't cover even  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the scrapbook but space is up. When you write you don't have to be this lengthy although you certainly can be. The main thing is just WRITE.

By: Pat Smith

\* \* \* \* \*

#### CONTINUED: FORDING THE SOUTH PLATTE

In these Black Hills before coming to the South Pass, was where they found a perfect hunters paradise. Deer and antelope roamed the hillsides. Sage hens, grouse and pheasant were everywhere. The small streams were alive with the speckled mountain trout. All of these were to be had almost without seeking. A sport in which the menfolks were more than willing to indulge.

#### CROSSING THE ROCKIES

Before them lay the Great Rockies, through which they were soon to begin a long, tiresome, hazardous journey. "When we get to the other side of that big mountain, we will be a long ways from Indiana, won't we, Mom?" 15 year old George remarked to his mother Malvina, leaning against the arm of her rocker one evening. "Bless his precious little heart. I was thinking the very same thing", Jane said.

After entering the Pass, there were long wearisome days of traveling over roads, deep rutted and difficult, roads that led through stretches of timber so dense it was like traveling through twilight. They made their way over mountain humps, through deep canyons and gullies, through alkali beds and miles of sage brush. Near the summit they came into a small valley. From there range after range of mountains, with the higher peaks looming in the distance were to be seen. The view must have been magnificent. Pikes Peak, Grey Peak, Mt. Cameron, Lons Peak and many others were to

be seen from this place. It was here they found the dividing springs. The waters from these many little springs divided, some found their way down the eastern slope of the Great Mountains while others rippled away down the western sides, their final destinations being thousands of miles apart. They passed through many small valleys, forty to eighty miles long and ten to thirty miles wide. They scarcely knew when the descent of these great mountains began, it was so gradual.

One night when they made camp near the summit, the sky was so clear the stars and the moon seemed close at hand. James and Norval brought out their fiddles. "We are going to serenade the moon and the stars", they said, "We will probably never be any nearer to them". They played "Old Jip Orqe", "Devils Hornpipe", "Soldiers Dream", "Pretty Girls" and many others, all popular old tunes of the day. Suddenly a howl, long, loud and mournful pierced the air, coming from a neighboring hill across the canyon. "It's a mountain wolf", they exclaimed in the same breath. "Let's give him some more fiddle". Altogether it must have seemed a little uncanny. At any rate it was a new kind of accompaniment to their music, the likes of which they had never heard before.

The descent through very gradual and hardly noticeable at the beginning, seemed a little more hazardous, than climbing the steep hills and mountains had been. They passed through Northeast Nevada, through Montana and Idaho, all Oregon Country at that time.

#### GLIMPSES OF OREGON

At LaGrande, they laid over for a week or two to rest, and it was there Dr. Robbins declared it would be wanton cruelty to drive the worn-out cattle another mile. "I'll not see the faithful feasts falling by the way-side, nor leave their bones to bleach beside the trail." A Conference was held that evening around the camp-fire. "We will either have to camp here for some time, and goodness knows it's a cold and windy place, or take passage down the Columbia on flat boats, and leave the cattle and horses here for a few weeks. I met a man in The Dalles today by the name of Harper. He said the stock would make it over the winter if necessary in the hills around Mosier." And this is the course they decided to follow. The animals were driven up into the hills and the man Harper agreed to look after them for two yoke of oxen in payment for his services. Loading their household goods onto flat boats, they took passage down the Columbia. Needless to say this trip hazardous and terrifying, with the great walls of granite looming on either side, brought misery and suffering, to the women and little children, and especially to some members of the party who had contracted Mountain Fever at LaGrande. Also, it rained nearly all of the way down.

What a comforting relief it must have been when at the mouth of the Willamette, they boarded the famous old river boat THE LOT WHITCOMBE. They landed at Portland, in a drizzling rain. Kerosene lamps and candle lights shone dimly through the drizzle. It took less than half an hour to traverse the muddy streets and see the town, a mere handful of houses, with a store, a livery stable, one hotel and a black-smith shop. Though at the time Portland was beginning to develop into one of the main trade-centers for farmers scattered throughout the valley. It was during this brief stop over that Nathaniel Robbins had the pleasure of meeting one of his boy-hood friends, Govenor Joseph Lane. Four years before, Joseph Lane had been appointed Oregon's First Territorial Govenor by James K. Polk, President at that time. It was largely through Gov. Lane's influence that Nathaniel Robbins had decided to join the great Westward Emigration.

Nathaniel Robbins was a member of Oregon's first Constitutional Convention, representing Clackamas Country, and held at Salem in August and September of 1857.

The trip from Portland up to Oregon City (their destination) was thoroughly enjoyed by every member of this tired and weary party of emigrants. The skies had cleared and it was warm spring like weather. The woods fringing the banks of the Willamette were a mass of wild shrubs and flowers, all in full bloom, all new and rare to them, though common in the Oregon woods.

They were met at the landing by a Colonel White, a friend and benefactor to all the emigrants. Through his kind efforts they all found good warm sleeping quarters with plenty to eat. He also told them there they could find a team of horses, and a wagoneer who would help them move all their household good and belongings to a safe place until they found a suitable house to live in. He told them of a sizeable house down near the river bank, near the present site of the Locks, in what was then known as Lynn City. It was their first home in Oregon. Their first task after moving into their new quarters, was doing up all the family washings. Down at the riverside they built fires, heated water in the great copper kettles they had brought with them and washed and washed to their hearts content. The clothes looked so pretty and white again. It was their first introduction to the poison oak that grew everywhere, though unacknowledged until a few days later, when every member of the family broke out with a sort of itching rash they could not account for, until enlightened by a kindly neighbor. Minerva went complacently about spreading her wash on the soft green grass to bleach, she said in the Oregon sun and thus her family escaped the mysterious rash.

Next day and for many days, Dr. Robbins, his four sons and his sons-in-law, John Hamilton went exploring, before they found a suitable place to stake out their claims. Out in what is now the Stafford Country, they found land that was rolling, not too many steep hills, and where the soil looked rich and loamy. It was there they met William Bird. He had been there five years, he told them, had no very near neighbors and would be very glad to have some. After talking it over with the women folks, there was where they decided to locate and lost no time in carrying out their plans.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### APPOINTMENT AS MAYOR

from Oscar Miller's memoirs

It was only a short time after the resignation of Mr. Willoughby that the City Council appointed me as the Mayor of Greensburg. I assumed the office on the 21st day of February, 1902 to fill out his unexpired term of office.

I had not been in the office but a short time until I was notified by a committee of the Council that there was a Pinkerton Detective from Chicago employed by the city to look after the petty thievery that was going on in the city. They told me that this detective was then on duty and had been for several weeks, that he made all reports to the Chicago agency, and the home office reported to the Council committee his findings. I was to meet them and the committee at stated times, read the reports of the detective. The committee would usually come to my law office, which was in the K. of P. Building, and we would have a secret meeting up in the K. of P. Lodge room and read what the Pinkerton detective had to say in his reports.

There was a lot of petty thievery going on, and we were surprised to know the names of fellows who were engaged in the business. The town papers were full of accounts of these nocturnal visits, where homes were entered and purses and pocket-

-books were taken from clothing while people slept. Sometimes thieves would strip hen houses and carry a large amount of poultry away to the great disgust and loss of the chicken raisers.

Our detective did report that there was a gang of thieves who were doing a lot of this petty thieving, and gave the names of many of them, but he said he was working to get some higher-up fellows with whom he had not yet made a contact. I did not know who the Pinkerton man was, and neither did the committee know him. He had slipped into Greensburg on the night train, unannounced to anyone. Each day we kept getting letters from the agency with complete typewritten copies showing what our detective was doing each day. Our detective, like Sherlock Holmes, wanted his identity to be covered in mystery as much as possible. We kept wondering who this fellow could be. I kept my eyes on every stranger I met, but still the mystery remained unsolved.

The letters kept pouring in each day, telling what our detective was doing. In one of his letters he told us that there was one of our policemen who went by the name of "Deacon" and was well acquainted with all the underworld. He knew all the gamblers, thugs and bums, but "Deacon" was not much of a church goer and believed in letting the boys have a good time. He also said "Deacon" thought an "open" town was better than too closed a one. He said that "Deacon" gave him the names of a number of fellows, well known to us, who engaged in pilfering, that surprised us.

I became very curious to know who our Pinkerton man was. As I was still in close touch with the telephone management, I found out they had recently employed a new lineman. He was pointed out to me. He was a big, stout, husky fellow. I suspicioned he might be our man. In a few days I was in the Mayor's Office, and looking down across the street I saw this same fellow busily engaged in conversation with Tony Trisler, who ran a plumbing and repair shop just back of the Citizen's National Bank. Tony was a good mechanic, and besides being a plumber, he could sharpen a lawnmower so sharp it would almost sing a Christian song. He was also a first class locksmith, and could make a key for any door in town. Some people thought he liked to use them in opening doors at night, but this may have been only a supposition on the part of town gossips.

However, the next day or two later we received a typewritten letter from the Pinkerton agency, stating that our detective had reported that he had had an interesting talk with Tony in which he said he had a lot of postage stamps that he had bought from the fellows who must have robbed the post office. He said that Tony got rather confidential, and also said he thought he could go to a certain barn where a large amount of stamps were located. The detective also said that when he tried to quiz him some more, Tony rebuffed him and said, "You want to know too much", so he had let him alone.

The next day or two our detective reported that he had located a "gambling joint" on the south side of the public square upstairs west of the Burns Block. He went in and joined the fellows in a social game of poker. He made the acquaintance of some of the boys. He said there were three or four poker tables running, and it looked like the proprietor was doing a good "check-off" business.

He also said there was only one bawdy house in town, but it had no connection in any way with the gang of thieves who were doing a thriving business, and the police department was none too watchful on its job. "Deacon" said he wanted to be easy with his political friends, and told our detective if he and the boys wanted to do a little pilfering on the sly, he wouldn't look, and would try to stay away from them.

One day along in the afternoon I was in the Mayor's Office looking over some of my official business when in came the big lineman, accompanied by his friend Tony Trisler. There were only a few persons in the Mayor's court room. The big detective seemed to be very angry, and said, "Mr. Mayor, I want to be protected from that very offensive fellow over there in the corner", and he pointed out a little, slim, inoffensive looking fellow.

I said, "Will you please tell me what he has done to offend you?" "Your honor", he answered, "This little scamp is very offensive. He follows me every day and shadows me like I was a rogue or a thief. I claim to be a gentleman, and I don't want to have a little snipe like him dogging my footsteps. The other evening I was having a stroll with my lady friend. Darkness was coming on, and just as we turned the corner, there stood this little cur, who had evidently been following us all evening. I say, your honor, this little scamp is a pestiferous and insulting little devil and gets his nose into everybody's business but his own."

Just then the little fellow stepped out and said, "I will not allow this big, overgrown cuss to call me names and insult me in this manner. I have done this man no harm. I have run across him a time or two, and he claims I have been following him. I have done nothing of the kind."

The big fellow retorted by saying, "You know that is a damned lie, and you know it." I then used the gavel and said, "Now, gentlemen, you must act like men of good manners while you are in my court." This did not quiet them down entirely.

Tony Trisler was taking the whole affair in, and seemed to be enjoying it. You could see that the big telephone lineman was making a fine impression on him.

The quarrel went on quite a bit, but in more subdued tones of voice. Finally the big lineman addressed me by saying, "Your Honor, I want you to swear me in and give me police powers. I want to be protected."

I looked him squarely in the face. I did not know what he was up to; and as he was a stranger, and not knowing his designs, I refused him. He and Tony and a number of other persons left the room, and the little fellow followed them.

( continued in next issue )

\* \* \* \* \*

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P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

WINTER ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

JANUARY 1993

OCCASION: Thirty-Third Annual Dinner Meeting of the Historical Society of Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian Church, NE corner of the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Feb. 27 1993 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the church, \$6.00 each. Please reserve by check sent to Maurice Keith, 773 E. County Rd. 200 N, Greensburg. Deadline is the evening of Feb. 24th.

PROGRAM: "George Rogers Clark-Triumph to Tragedy".

George Rogers Clark, more likely than not, was the saviour of the American Revolution. His success came early and for most of his life he fought critics, politicians, and creditors. His life was the epitome of F. Scott Fitzgerald's statement: "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy".

Joe Westhafer will be the speaker, and Joe always puts on a good show. The meal will, no doubt, be out of this world. There will be a short business meeting, if you should have any suggestions as to improving the Society, bring them with you. This will be a great meeting, reserve early and avoid the crowd. Oh yes, bring a little extra cash to pay those dues.

\* \* \* \*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paul Somers

LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Steven Stradley

FALL MEETING was held at the Local REMC with about twenty-five of the faithful in attendance. The program consisted of a slide presentation of Indiana Art Work narrated by Herb Scheidler. The art work included paintings, quilts, coverlets, glass & photographs. Dorothy Petty presented the Society with the minutes of the Evangelical United Brethren of Decatur & Ripley Countys circuit meetings from 1860-1892. Paul Somers, upon whose property stands the center of population monument, discussed the up-keep of said monument, wondering if the state or county could provide such. Hand made cookies and drinks were served, quite good cookies.

\* \* \* \* \*  
ABOUT SMILEY FOWLER'S  
"SPEED SENSATIONS"

In Westport, one Sunday afternoon, I and some others while hunting through an auto junk yard was an antique car (a Winton I believe) that had a friction clutch with a leather covered disk on the fly-wheel and a leather covered rod to the drive shaft. The rod was at right angles to axis of the disk. A short length of rod pressed against the disk and could be moved up and down passing the exact center of the disk. Below this center the rod would be rotated to transmit a forward motion to the drive. The lower it was the more rapid the drive. Above the center the transmission was reversed. As the rod passed the disk center a short bit the rod was sprung away to make the drive neutral. I do not know if the engine was crosswise under the seat. Some antique cars were, and I don't know how the drive rod was connected to the drive shaft and to the rear axel. But surely it was only one of a kind. (From a letter written by: Phil Deiwert)

ARE YOU A WITCH ?

Chances are in about 1 to 10 you may be a water witch, sometimes called dowsing, devining or rod walking.

The art of water witching goes back to the fifteenth century with hundreds of articles on the subject. The technique has not changed. The practitioner takes a forked branch of live wood (almost any kind) with a butt end; he grasps the end of the branches with his palms up, points the butt end up, bends the branches apart somewhat and walks to and fro to find a spot at which the butt end will describe an arc of 180 degrees and points to the ground. With this forked branch one will be able to locate under ground streams and estimate its depth.

Also I have been able to find field tile by bending two pieces of wire at a right angle and pointing the wires straight ahead, and when you get over the tile the wires will cross and be parallel with the tile.

Will it work ? If you have the power, the rod twists with a measurable force, strong enough to peel the bark off the rod and the skin off ones hand.

What is the feeling like ? If you are carrying a flexible cane fishing pole across a given area and suddenly the pole bends toward the ground - about like the pull of a half-pound bluegill. Pass the spot and the pole straightens up again.

When we were getting a water well dug a few years ago, the driller ask if the location has been witched? I said "no," and he said to make sure we find water he will witch it. Taking his pocket knife, he cut a branch from a maple tree in the front yard, and soon found where two underground streams crossed.

He told me to try and sure enough it worked for me and the strongest pull was where he had marked the spot. Others tried with no sucess. Then the driller said, "sometimes it works if we join hands". He was right as long as the inside hands were joined and each person held one branch of the rod with his outside hand the "non-witch" was a witch and got full power.

Why does the rod move ? Is it because of unconscious muscular activity, or mind reading feats? Is it like the fact that a magnet will make a piece of iron jump through air - but not a piece of copper? Is it like the fact that the homing pigeon will find its home? Perhaps someday, someone will be able to answer these questions. Yet witching remains a mystery today as it was years ago.

There are a few professional water witches in this county today and for a fee will come out and witch your well site.

EXCERPTS FROM OSCAR MILLER'S MEMOIRS

Speaking at Clarksburg

The next speech that I made was in company with William Goddard, who was the father of John W. Goddard. Those two men had been living in Washington, D.C., holding down good, fat offices while James C. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur were in office; but the election of Grover Cleveland had caused them to pack their trunks and come home to Greensburg. Mr. William Goddard and I were billed to speak at a Republican rally at the town of Clarksburg on Monday evening, October 29, 1888. I think that was the date. Mr. Goddard was a very tall man and wore a broadcloth Prince Albert coat and was a very fine looking gentleman of the old school of politicians. He had been in Washington, D.C., and had elbowed around with statesmen from all parts of the nation until he had acquired the tastes and gentility of Washington society. He did not wear a plug hat on our trip to Clarksburg, but when he was in Washington, I imagine he may have worn one on state and exclusive occasions. If he did, he certainly must have been a very striking figure when he went out to dine with other dignitaries at the famous DelMonico. He told me that the DelMonico was the finest eating establishment in Washington at the time. He was a very fine fellow to be with. Of course, he was considerably older than I was; and while there was quite a difference in our ages, I enjoyed his company exceedingly.

We drove up to the town in a buggy, and when we arrived they gave us a real fine reception. The improvised Clarksburg Band, which was largely composed of drums, big and little, and fifes, made plenty of noise. Everyone appeared to be happy and enjoying the occasion. When we went into the big school building, we were greeted by a large audience. We were also honored by the presence of quite a number of ladies. I do not now remember who the chairman was, but there was one man who was much in evidence, who busied himself by running about seating and taking care of the crowd in general. He proved to be Jeff Davis, who afterwards became sheriff of the county. When the audience quieted down, the chairman then made a few introductory remarks. He then introduced me to make the opening speech.

I started my speech by saying that I was unusually honored by being called out to make the first talk of the evening when I was in company with the eloquent and distinguished Mr. William Goddard, who had spent some years in the capitol city of Washington. I am quite sure the reason is that the honorable chairman desires to "keep the good wine for the last."

I had the theme of my speech pretty well committed. I said, "We hear a great deal about the tariff here lately. Not long ago I heard about a couple of fellows who were out hunting. They came up out of the woods and came to a railroad track. They were not used to railroads. They stood there a short time. Soon a Lightning Express came whizzing by. They stood in astonishment. When they had recovered from the exciting shock, one of them said, 'Bill, I bet you that was the Tarriff!'" The audience was kind enough to laugh at this anecdote and give me a due amount of applause.

I then said, "I now want to talk for a while about this protective tariff. I also want to talk about the miserable condition we have been brought into under the free trade fallacy as administered in Washington under Grover Cleveland." I then proceeded to a full argument, relating to the effects of free trade and its destructive tendency when applied to the business of the country, also the beneficent results that had been brought about by the high protective tariff as administered by the Republicans.

I must have consumed about one-half hour in discussing these issues somewhat in detail. I closed my talk by saying: "My dear folks, this matter will be very gloriously adjusted when we go to the polls in November. We will elect that great statesman from Indiana, the Honorable Benjamin Harrison." The mention of this man's name brought great and continued applause.

The chairman then stepped forward and said, "I now have the very great pleasure of introducing Hon. William Goddard of Greensburg, who will address you." Mr. Goddard stepped forward and was greeted with considerable applause. He was a very good speaker and deliberative in his opening remarks. After he got started, he spoke with more vim and made his points very good and effective. He also spoke considerably about the good results of the protective tariff. He said that the Democrats had changed their position several times in reference to the tariff. He said in the first place they had declared in favor of free trade, then at the next election they declared themselves in favor of tariff for revenue only, and now they had come back to their first love and declared for free trade. In fact, you couldn't tell just where they were. He said they put him in mind of a quack doctor he once heard of, who was explaining about food and how it went from the mouth to the stomach. This doctor said that all solid food went from the mouth into the throat where it struck a lid and then went on down on that side of this lid; and when liquids such as milk or coffee struck this lid, it raised and allowed the liquids to go down on the other side, thus separating the liquids from solid food. Someone who had been listening to this quack spoke up and said, "I think that in eating mush and milk, it certainly would make a hell of a lot of flipping and flopping." Goddard then said that was the way of the Democrats - they changed their minds so often that it did produce a lot of flipping and flopping, and it was hard to tell just where they would flop to in the next election. He said, "At present, as Mr. Miller has explained to you, they have got back and now declare themselves in favor of complete free trade. Now if Grover Cleveland gets back again into power, it is hard to tell what a mess he may make of it, or how much flipping and flopping may go on."

Mr. Goddard made a very fine speech and talked about one hour. He carried the attention of his audience with interest and attention. When we returned to Greensburg the chairman said he was quite well pleased from the reports of the meeting that he had received from some people who were there. He also told us that the committee wanted us to go down to the town of Westport on the following Tuesday, which would be October 30, 1888.

The campaign was now considerably advanced, and the Republicans were wanting to lose no time or leave no stone unturned in order to carry the oncoming election. Mr. Goddard was also very much interested in the results, as I think he wanted to get back to Washington, the city he had grown to like very much. Mr. Goddard and I talked the matter over, and we consented to go. At once large posters were put up, and the meeting was duly announced. I think that my friend, James Kennedy, the county auditor, was also much interested in the results, as he wanted to control that office for another four year term. He told me he had a very valuable political henchman down there in that "neck of the woods" who could do him a lot of good. He said his name was Jap Patterson, who carried about 50 votes around in his vest pocket, and he wanted to encourage him by having a lively meeting down in that vicinity.

When Mr. Goddard and I arrived down there, the town was pretty well filled up by people who had driven in from the hills and farms of Jackson and Sandcreek Townships. There were no saloons in the town, but from the way some of the boys acted, I concluded that they must have had a little liquer that had been saved over from the Democratic rally of the previous week. There was considerable enthusiasm by the crowd. The Westport band rendered a few pieces that from the point of volume much outclassed the harmony of music.

I will not attempt to go into full details of this meeting. It was much the same as the one at Clarksburg, Mr. Goddard was at his best, and aquitted himself very handsomely. He was a very imposing figure as he stood straight up in his long Prince Albert coat, made of fine broadcloth. He was fully six feet tall. He was also a good speaker. I thought as he prodeeded that he improved in telling his mush and milk and flip-flop anecdote. He talked about an hour, and I thought was rather effective. I wound up the meeting by talking about one-half hour; and as no one walked out on me, I thought the crowd received my argument with considerable interest. I talked nearly altogether about the tariff, which was the main issue of the campaign. I prefaced my talk with some reference to the great achievements of Governor Benjamin Harrison, who would soon be our next president. The name of Harrison always brought forth a vigorous applause. We met a lot of people, and as we went home, we felt the meeting had had some good effect, and we congratulated ourselves by the great enthusiasm displayed by the people who were there.

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From: "I Remember" by: Elizabeth Robbins Davis

#### MY FIRST HOME

I remember my first home, where I was born, as a four room, partly log structure. The rooms were kitchen, summer-kitchen, living room, and a spare room.

Our nicest room was this "spare room" at the southwest side of the house. It had a nice rag carpet, curtains, a company bed with nice white spread, a tall desk, an organ, a horsehair covered settee with two matching chairs. From the ceiling was suspended a bead basket...all color beads...and all lengths and sizes.... a beautiful thing, a gift from the Ballieu relatives in LA. This room faced west, with a door and a walk leading to a gate in the

picket fence.

North of the spare room was the living room, also facing west with a door and a walk leading to the gate. Here was an enormous fireplace on the north; beds in the south west and south east corners of the room. One was a "little bed", we called it, and we children slept in it. If we were afraid in the night there was always the chance to cross the room and crawl in with Ma and Pa and scoot down to the foot of the bed and feel so secure. A small square table stood under a window in the northwest corner. There was a big closet on each side of the fireplace, and a place to pile up firewood. On the northeast side stood a bureau, the one Faith has now. In one drawer was kept asaphoedita, from which to make bags to wear around our necks to keep away disease. I don't think my folks ever believed it would, but it was the custom. Directly in the corner was the gun that my father used to kill hogs, and to fire off on the 4th of July and sometimes Christmas. I would get my head covered when I knew he was going to use it, and then maybe pull the covers down at the exact time it went off...a "scared-cat"!

This living room also had a rag carpet. In the winter my mother tore rags for carpets, and in the spring they were sent to the old weaver, Mrs. Lucky, for weaving. Then Mother would remove the tacks and take out the old carpet for a good beating, later using it in the kitchen. Fresh straw went on the floor, then the new carpet was tacked down. She would also put new straw into the straw ticks under the feather beds, so that we could hardly climb in at night. Lots of people had bugs in their beds, but we never did at our house.

The other rooms on the north east side were the summer-kitchen and a winter kitchen, with cook stove, eating table, cupboards for dishes and pots and pans, a place for a wash pan (or bath), and a bucket of water ready.

There were some smaller buildings outside, the wood house, the milk house, with a cement trough for cool water, so that crocks of milk could be set in and kept cool and sweet, till ready to skim and churn for butter to use and sell. There was a good sized barn, mostly log, in which to keep livestock and tools. There was an enormous box we called the granary, and, risking a good scolding, we would climb in it and play.

For recreation, there was a sand pile, a sliding board, (just a wide board leaned against the board fence, which we wore slick at the expense of our shoe soles and the seats of our pants.) There was plenty of room to run and play, a big apple orchard, cherries to pick, gooseberries, etc. A lane lead to a small pond where we and the pigs liked to play, where one day Cordia and I were walking around the edge and I slipped in. Cordia pulled me out by the hair of my head, and Mother scolded her, because I was five years younger than she, and she should have taken care of me, (so Mother said).

It was the custom for every child to have her ears pierced. So, when I was five years old, I was persuaded to let Mother pierce mine. The process was to rub the lower part of the ear

until it was numb, then to put a ball of white yarn back of the ear, and using a small sharp needle (which had been sterilized over a candle flame), threaded with white silk thread, gently put the needle through the ear, pulling the thread through and tying it under the ear. This thread was left until the hole healed, pulling it back and forth often so the hole in the ear would not grow up. Mother got one pierced; but then I decided I didn't want the other done, as it did hurt some, which I had been told it wouldn't, so I ran up the lane and it took lots of coaxing to get me back.....and the promise of gold earrings very soon. The next Christmas I did get the earrings, gold, in blue cotton in a little blue trunk, and wore them many years.

I think we were pretty healthy, as a rule, but some times would have to have a doctor. Dr. Burroughs came to our home when needed. I remember once...I must have been sort of delirious, as the bed I was in kept going up nearly to the ceiling (so I thought), and I couldn't keep the medicine down...that Dr. Burroughs called for two flat irons. He put one on his lap, upside down, put a few drops of something made of flour and water on it, then a few drops of medicine, then more of the paste, and set the other iron, heated now, on the first, making a wafer. I was supposed to swallow that but I couldn't, even slick as it was. Dr. Burroughs would put his horse in the barn and stay all night with the patient. If anyone needed him they would come on horseback to find him. If we had "lung fever", as a last resort he would make a big fly blister...using a fly from South America...ground up and applied as a poultice on the chest. The skin would raise in a blister and the fever would go down, if the patient was still alive.

Many memories throng me as I write...of the old goose that laid eggs in the tanzy bed and flopped me if I went too near; of one pet dog, a white one named Curly; of Old Pidey who kicked me across the stable and knocked me unconscious, thinking I was the dog come to pull her tail; of relatives come visiting, and one little girl dropping my doll and breaking her; of a baby in a white casket wearing a white dress with blue bows down the front (a little sister who only lived five days) and my Mother crying so; but enough for now.

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P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

WINTER ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

JANUARY 1993

OCCASION: Thirty-Third Annual Dinner Meeting of the Historical Society of Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian Church, NE corner of the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Feb. 27 1993 at 6:30 P.M.

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George Rogers Clark, more likely than not, was the saviour of the American Revolution. His success came early and for most of his life he fought critics, politicians, and creditors. His life was the epitome of F. Scott Fitzgerald's statement: "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy".

Joe Westhafer will be the speaker, and Joe always puts on a good show. The meal will, no doubt, be out of this world. There will be a short business meeting, if you should have any suggestions as to improving the Society, bring them with you. This will be a great meeting, reserve early and avoid the crowd. Oh yes, bring a little extra cash to pay those dues.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paul Somers

LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Steven Stradley

FALL MEETING was held at the local REMC with about twenty-five of the faithful in attendance. The program consisted of a slide presentation of Indiana Art Work narrated by Herb Scheidler. The art work included paintings, quilts, coverlets, glass & photographs. Dorothy Petty presented the Society with the minutes of the Evangelical United Brethren of Decatur & Ripley Countys circuit meetings from 1860-1892. Paul Somers, upon whose property stands the center of population monument, discussed the up-keep of said monument, wondering if the state or county could provide such. Hand made cookies and drinks were served, quite good cookies.

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ABOUT SMILEY FOWLER'S "SPEED SENSATIONS"

In Westport, one Sunday afternoon, I and some others while hunting through an auto junk yard was an antique car (a Winton I believe) that had a friction clutch with a leather covered disk on the fly-wheel and a leather covered rod to the drive shaft. The rod was at right angles to axis of the disk. A short length of rod pressed against the disk and could be moved up and down passing the exact center of the disk. Below this center the rod would be rotated to transmit a forward motion to the drive. The lower it was the more rapid the drive. Above the center the transmission was reversed. As the rod passed the disk center a short bit the rod was sprung away to make the drive neutral. I do not know if the engine was crosswise under the seat. Some antique cars were, and I don't know how the drive rod was connected to the drive shaft and to the rear axel. But surely it was only one of a kind.

(From a letter written by: Phil Deiwert)

ARE YOU A WITCH ?

Chances are in about 1 to 10 you may be a water witch, sometimes called dowsing, devining or rod walking.

The art of water witching goes back to the fifteenth century with hundreds of articles on the subject. The technique has not changed. The practitioner takes a forked branch of live wood (almost any kind) with a butt end; he grasps the end of the branches with his palms up, points the butt end up, bends the branches apart somewhat and walks to and fro to find a spot at which the butt end will describe an arc of 180 degrees and points to the ground. With this forked branch one will be able to locate under ground streams and estimate its depth.

Also I have been able to find field tile by bending two pieces of wire at a right angle and pointing the wires straight ahead, and when you get over the tile the wires will cross and be parallel with the tile.

Will it work ? If you have the power, the rod twists with a measurable force, strong enough to peel the bark off the rod and the skin off ones hand.

What is the feeling like ? If you are carrying a flexible cane fishing pole across a given area and suddenly the pole bends toward the ground - about like the pull of a half-pound bluegill. Pass the spot and the pole straightens up again.

When we were getting a water well dug a few years ago, the driller ask if the location has been witched? I said "no," and he said to make sure we find water he will witch it. Taking his pocket knife, he cut a branch from a maple tree in the front yard, and soon found where two underground streams crossed.

He told me to try and sure enough it worked for me and the strongest pull was where he had marked the spot. Others tried with no sucess. Then the driller said, "sometimes it works if we join hands". He was right as long as the inside hands were joined and each person held one branch of the rod with his outside hand the "non-witch" was a witch and got full power.

Why does the rod move ? Is it because of unconscious muscular activity, or mind reading feats? Is it like the fact that a magnet will make a piece of iron jump through air - but not a piece of copper? Is it like the fact that the homing pigeon will find its home? Perhaps someday, someone will be able to answer these questions. Yet witching remains a mystery today as it was years ago.

There are a few professional water witches in this county today and for a fee will come out and witch your well site.

EXCERPTS FROM OSCAR MILLER'S MEMOIRS

Speaking at Clarksburg

The next speech that I made was in company with William Goddard, who was the father of John W. Goddard. Those two men had been living in Washington, D.C., holding down good, fat offices while James C. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur were in office; but the election of Grover Cleveland had caused them to pack their trunks and come home to Greensburg. Mr. William Goddard and I were billed to speak at a Republican rally at the town of Clarksburg on Monday evening, October 29, 1888. I think that was the date. Mr. Goddard was a very tall man and wore a broadcloth Prince Albert coat and was a very fine looking gentleman of the old school of politicians. He had been in Washington, D.C., and had elbowed around with statesmen from all parts of the nation until he had acquired the tastes and gentility of Washington society. He did not wear a plug hat on our trip to Clarksburg, but when he was in Washington, I imagine he may have worn one on state and exclusive occasions. If he did, he certainly must have been a very striking figure when he went out to dine with other dignitaries at the famous DelMonico. He told me that the DelMonico was the finest eating establishment in Washington at the time. He was a very fine fellow to be with. Of course, he was considerably older than I was; and while there was quite a difference in our ages, I enjoyed his company exceedingly.

We drove up to the town in a buggy, and when we arrived they gave us a real fine reception. The improvised Clarksburg Band, which was largely composed of drums, big and little, and fifes, made plenty of noise. Everyone appeared to be happy and enjoying the occasion. When we went into the big school building, we were greeted by a large audience. We were also honored by the presence of quite a number of ladies. I do not now remember who the chairman was, but there was one man who was much in evidence, who busied himself by running about seating and taking care of the crowd in general. He proved to be Jeff Davis, who afterwards became sheriff of the county. When the audience quieted down, the chairman then made a few introductory remarks. He then introduced me to make the opening speech.

I started my speech by saying that I was unusually honored by being called out to make the first talk of the evening when I was in company with the eloquent and distinguished Mr. William Goddard, who had spent some years in the capitol city of Washington. I am quite sure the reason is that the honorable chairman desires to "keep the good wine for the last."

I had the theme of my speech pretty well committed. I said, "We hear a great deal about the tariff here lately. Not long ago I heard about a couple of fellows who were out hunting. They came up out of the woods and came to a railroad track. They were not used to railroads. They stood there a short time. Soon a Lightning Express came whizzing by. They stood in astonishment. When they had recovered from the exciting shock, one of them said, 'Bill, I bet you that was the Tarriff!'" The audience was kind enough to laugh at this anecdote and give me a due amount of applause.

I then said, "I now want to talk for a while about this protective tariff. I also want to talk about the miserable condition we have been brought into under the free trade fallacy as administered in Washington under Grover Cleveland." I then proceeded to a full argument, relating to the effects of free trade and its destructive tendency when applied to the business of the country, also the beneficent results that had been brought about by the high protective tariff as administered by the Republicans.

I must have consumed about one-half hour in discussing these issues somewhat in detail. I closed my talk by saying: "My dear folks, this matter will be very gloriously adjusted when we go to the polls in November. We will elect that great statesman from Indiana, the Honorable Benjamin Harrison." The mention of this man's name brought great and continued applause.

The chairman then stepped forward and said, "I now have the very great pleasure of introducing Hon. William Goddard of Greensburg, who will address you." Mr. Goddard stepped forward and was greeted with considerable applause. He was a very good speaker and deliberative in his opening remarks. After he got started, he spoke with more vim and made his points very good and effective. He also spoke considerably about the good results of the protective tariff. He said that the Democrats had changed their position several times in reference to the tariff. He said in the first place they had declared in favor of free trade, then at the next election they declared themselves in favor of tariff for revenue only, and now they had come back to their first love and declared for free trade. In fact, you couldn't tell just where they were. He said they put him in mind of a quack doctor he once heard of, who was explaining about food and how it went from the mouth to the stomach. This doctor said that all solid food went from the mouth into the throat where it struck a lid and then went on down on that side of this lid; and when liquids such as milk or coffee struck this lid, it raised and allowed the liquids to go down on the other side, thus separating the liquids from solid food. Someone who had been listening to this quack spoke up and said, "I think that in eating mush and milk, it certainly would make a hell of a lot of flipping and flopping." Goddard then said that was the way of the Democrats - they changed their minds so often that it did produce a lot of flipping and flopping, and it was hard to tell just where they would flop to in the next election. He said, "At present, as Mr. Miller has explained to you, they have got back and now declare themselves in favor of complete free trade. Now if Grover Cleveland gets back again into power, it is hard to tell what a mess he may make of it, or how much flipping and flopping may go on."

Mr. Goddard made a very fine speech and talked about one hour. He carried the attention of his audience with interest and attention. When we returned to Greensburg the chairman said he was quite well pleased from the reports of the meeting that he had received from some people who were there. He also told us that the committee wanted us to go down to the town of Westport on the following Tuesday, which would be October 30, 1888.

The campaign was now considerably advanced, and the Republicans were wanting to lose no time or leave no stone unturned in order to carry the oncoming election. Mr. Goddard was also very much interested in the results, as I think he wanted to get back to Washington, the city he had grown to like very much. Mr. Goddard and I talked the matter over, and we consented to go. At once large posters were put up, and the meeting was duly announced. I think that my friend, James Kennedy, the county auditor, was also much interested in the results, as he wanted to control that office for another four year term. He told me he had a very valuable political henchman down there in that "neck of the woods" who could do him a lot of good. He said his name was Jap Patterson, who carried about 50 votes around in his vest pocket, and he wanted to encourage him by having a lively meeting down in that vicinity.

When Mr. Goddard and I arrived down there, the town was pretty well filled up by people who had driven in from the hills and farms of Jackson and Sandcreek Townships. There were no saloons in the town, but from the way some of the boys acted, I concluded that they must have had a little liquer that had been saved over from the Democratic rally of the previous week. There was considerable enthusiasm by the crowd. The Westport band rendered a few pieces that from the point of volume much outclassed the harmony of music.

I will not attempt to go into full details of this meeting. It was much the same as the one at Clarksburg, Mr. Goddard was at his best, and aquitted himself very handsomely. He was a very imposing figure as he stood straight up in his long Prince Albert coat, made of fine broadcloth. He was fully six feet tall. He was also a good speaker. I thought as he prodeed that he improved in telling his mush and milk and flip-flop anecdote. He talked about an hour, and I thought was rather effective. I wound up the meeting by talking about one-half hour; and as no one walked out on me, I thought the crowd received my argument with considerable interest. I talked nearly altogether about the tariff, which was the main issue of the campaign. I prefaced my talk with some reference to the great achievements of Governor Benjamin Harrison, who would soon be our next president. The name of Harrison always brought forth a vigorous applause. We met a lot of people, and as we went home, we felt the meeting had had some good effect, and we congratulated ourselves by the great enthusiasm displayed by the people who were there.

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From: "I Remember" by: Elizabeth Robbins Davis

#### MY FIRST HOME

I remember my first home, where I was born, as a four room, partly log structure. The rooms were kitchen, summer-kitchen, living room, and a spare room.

Our nicest room was this "spare room" at the southwest side of the house. It had a nice rag carpet, curtains, a company bed with nice white spread, a tall desk, an organ, a horsehair covered settee with two matching chairs. From the ceiling was suspended a bead basket...all color beads...and all lengths and sizes.... a beautiful thing, a gift from the Ballieu relatives in LA. This room faced west, with a door and a walk leading to a gate in the

picket fence.

North of the spare room was the living room, also facing west with a door and a walk leading to the gate. Here was an enormous fireplace on the north; beds in the south west and south east corners of the room. One was a "little bed", we called it, and we children slept in it. If we were afraid in the night there was always the chance to cross the room and crawl in with Ma and Pa and scoot down to the foot of the bed and feel so secure. A small square table stood under a window in the northwest corner. There was a big closet on each side of the fireplace, and a place to pile up firewood. On the northeast side stood a bureau, the one Faith has now. In one drawer was kept asaphoedita, from which to make bags to wear around our necks to keep away disease. I don't think my folks ever believed it would, but it was the custom. Directly in the corner was the gun that my father used to kill hogs, and to fire off on the 4th of July and sometimes Christmas. I would get my head covered when I knew he was going to use it, and then maybe pull the covers down at the exact time it went off...a "scared-cat"!

This living room also had a rag carpet. In the winter my mother tore rags for carpets, and in the spring they were sent to the old weaver, Mrs. Lucky, for weaving. Then Mother would remove the tacks and take out the old carpet for a good beating, later using it in the kitchen. Fresh straw went on the floor, then the new carpet was tacked down. She would also put new straw into the straw ticks under the feather beds, so that we could hardly climb in at night. Lots of people had bugs in their beds, but we never did at our house.

The other rooms on the north east side were the summer-kitchen and a winter kitchen, with cook stove, eating table, cupboards for dishes and pots and pans, a place for a wash pan (or bath), and a bucket of water ready.

There were some smaller buildings outside, the wood house, the milk house, with a cement trough for cool water, so that crocks of milk could be set in and kept cool and sweet, till ready to skim and churn for butter to use and sell. There was a good sized barn, mostly log, in which to keep livestock and tools. There was an enormous box we called the granary, and, risking a good scolding, we would climb in it and play.

For recreation, there was a sand pile, a sliding board, (just a wide board leaned against the board fence, which we wore slick at the expense of our shoe soles and the seats of our pants.) There was plenty of room to run and play, a big apple orchard, cherries to pick, gooseberries, etc. A lane lead to a small pond where we and the pigs liked to play, where one day Cordia and I were walking around the edge and I slipped in. Cordia pulled me out by the hair of my head, and Mother scolded her, because I was five years younger than she, and she should have taken care of me, (so Mother said).

It was the custom for every child to have her ears pierced. So, when I was five years old, I was persuaded to let Mother pierce mine. The process was to rub the lower part of the ear

until it was numb, then to put a ball of white yarn back of the ear, and using a small sharp needle (which had been sterilized over a candle flame), threaded with white silk thread, gently put the needle through the ear, pulling the thread through and tying it under the ear. This thread was left until the hole healed, pulling it back and forth often so the hole in the ear would not grow up. Mother got one pierced, but then I decided I didn't want the other done, as it did hurt some, which I had been told it wouldn't, so I ran up the lane and it took lots of coaxing to get me back.....and the promise of gold earrings very soon. The next Christmas I did get the earrings, gold, in blue cotton in a little blue trunk, and wore them many years.

I think we were pretty healthy, as a rule, but some times would have to have a doctor. Dr. Burroughs came to our home when needed. I remember once...I must have been sort of delirious, as the bed I was in kept going up nearly to the ceiling (so I thought), and I couldn't keep the medicine down...that Dr. Burroughs called for two flat irons. He put one on his lap, upside down, put a few drops of something made of flour and water on it, then a few drops of medicine, then more of the paste, and set the other iron, heated now, on the first, making a wafer. I was supposed to swallow that but I couldn't, even slick as it was. Dr. Burroughs would put his horse in the barn and stay all night with the patient. If anyone needed him they would come on horseback to find him. If we had "lung fever", as a last resort he would make a big fly blister...using a fly from South America...ground up and applied as a poultice on the chest. The skin would raise in a blister and the fever would go down, if the patient was still alive.

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I had the theme of my speech pretty well committed. I said, "We hear a great deal about the tariff here lately. Not long ago I heard about a couple of fellows who were out hunting. They came up out of the woods and came to a railroad track. They were not used to railroads. They stood there a short time. Soon a Lightning Express came whizzing by. They stood in astonishment. When they had recovered from the exciting shock, one of them said, 'Bill, I bet you that was the Tarriff!'" The audience was kind enough to laugh at this anecdote and give me a due amount of applause.

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I must have consumed about one-half hour in discussing these issues somewhat in detail. I closed my talk by saying: "My dear folks, this matter will be very gloriously adjusted when we go to the polls in November. We will elect that great statesman from Indiana, the Honorable Benjamin Harrison." The mention of this man's name brought great and continued applause.

The chairman then stepped forward and said, "I now have the very great pleasure of introducing Hon. William Goddard of Greensburg, who will address you." Mr. Goddard stepped forward and was greeted with considerable applause. He was a very good speaker and deliberative in his opening remarks. After he got started, he spoke with more vim and made his points very good and effective. He also spoke considerably about the good results of the protective tariff. He said that the Democrats had changed their position several times in reference to the tariff. He said in the first place they had declared in favor of free trade, then at the next election they declared themselves in favor of tariff for revenue only, and now they had come back to their first love and declared for free trade. In fact, you couldn't tell just where they were. He said they put him in mind of a quack doctor he once heard of, who was explaining about food and how it went from the mouth to the stomach. This doctor said that all solid food went from the mouth into the throat where it struck a lid and then went on down on that side of this lid; and when liquids such as milk or coffee struck this lid, it raised and allowed the liquids to go down on the other side, thus separating the liquids from solid food. Someone who had been listening to this quack spoke up and said, "I think that in eating mush and milk, it certainly would make a hell of a lot of flipping and flopping." Goddard then said that was the way of the Democrats - they changed their minds so often that it did produce a lot of flipping and flopping, and it was hard to tell just where they would flop to in the next election. He said, "At present, as Mr. Miller has explained to you, they have got back and now declare themselves in favor of complete free trade. Now if Grover Cleveland gets back again into power, it is hard to tell what a mess he may make of it, or how much flipping and flopping may go on."

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From: "I Remember" by: Elizabeth Robbins Davis

#### MY FIRST HOME

I remember my first home, where I was born, as a four room, partly log structure. The rooms were kitchen, summer-kitchen, living room, and a spare room.

Our nicest room was this "spare room" at the southwest side of the house. It had a nice rag carpet, curtains, a company bed with nice white spread, a tall desk, an organ, a horsehair covered settee with two matching chairs. From the ceiling was suspended a bead basket...all color beads...and all lengths and sizes.... a beautiful thing, a gift from the Ballieu relatives in LA. This room faced west, with a door and a walk leading to a gate in the

picket fence.

North of the spare room was the living room, also facing west with a door and a walk leading to the gate. Here was an enormous fireplace on the north; beds in the south west and south east corners of the room. One was a "little bed", we called it, and we children slept in it. If we were afraid in the night there was always the chance to cross the room and crawl in with Ma and Pa and scoot down to the foot of the bed and feel so secure. A small square table stood under a window in the northwest corner. There was a big closet on each side of the fireplace, and a place to pile up firewood. On the northeast side stood a bureau, the one Faith has now. In one drawer was kept asaphoedita, from which to make bags to wear around our necks to keep away disease. I don't think my folks ever believed it would, but it was the custom. Directly in the corner was the gun that my father used to kill hogs, and to fire off on the 4th of July and sometimes Christmas. I would get my head covered when I knew he was going to use it, and then maybe pull the covers down at the exact time it went off...a "scared-cat"!

This living room also had a rag carpet. In the winter my mother tore rags for carpets, and in the spring they were sent to the old weaver, Mrs. Lucky, for weaving. Then Mother would remove the tacks and take out the old carpet for a good beating, later using it in the kitchen. Fresh straw went on the floor, then the new carpet was tacked down. She would also put new straw into the straw ticks under the feather beds, so that we could hardly climb in at night. Lots of people had bugs in their beds, but we never did at our house.

The other rooms on the north east side were the summer-kitchen and a winter kitchen, with cook stove, eating table, cupboards for dishes and pots and pans, a place for a wash pan (or bath), and a bucket of water ready.

There were some smaller buildings outside, the wood house, the milk house, with a cement trough for cool water, so that crocks of milk could be set in and kept cool and sweet, till ready to skim and churn for butter to use and sell. There was a good sized barn, mostly log, in which to keep livestock and tools. There was an enormous box we called the granary, and, risking a good scolding, we would climb in it and play.

For recreation, there was a sand pile, a sliding board, (just a wide board leaned against the board fence, which we wore slick at the expense of our shoe soles and the seats of our pants.) There was plenty of room to run and play, a big apple orchard, cherries to pick, gooseberries, etc. A lane lead to a small pond where we and the pigs liked to play, where one day Cordia and I were walking around the edge and I slipped in. Cordia pulled me out by the hair of my head, and Mother scolded her, because I was five years younger than she, and she should have taken care of me, (so Mother said).

It was the custom for every child to have her ears pierced. So, when I was five years old, I was persuaded to let Mother pierce mine. The process was to rub the lower part of the ear

until it was numb, then to put a ball of white yarn back of the ear, and using a small sharp needle (which had been sterilized over a candle flame), threaded with white silk thread, gently put the needle through the ear, pulling the thread through and tying it under the ear. This thread was left until the hole healed, pulling it back and forth often so the hole in the ear would not grow up. Mother got one pierced, but then I decided I didn't want the other done, as it did hurt some, which I had been told it wouldn't, so I ran up the lane and it took lots of coaxing to get me back.....and the promise of gold earrings very soon. The next Christmas I did get the earrings, gold, in blue cotton in a little blue trunk, and wore them many years.

I think we were pretty healthy, as a rule, but some times would have to have a doctor. Dr. Burroughs came to our home when needed. I remember once...I must have been sort of delirious, as the bed I was in kept going up nearly to the ceiling (so I thought), and I couldn't keep the medicine down...that Dr. Burroughs called for two flat irons. He put one on his lap, upside down, put a few drops of something made of flour and water on it, then a few drops of medicine, then more of the paste, and set the other iron, heated now, on the first, making a wafer. I was supposed to swallow that but I couldn't, even slick as it was. Dr. Burroughs would put his horse in the barn and stay all night with the patient. If anyone needed him they would come on horseback to find him. If we had "lung fever", as a last resort he would make a big fly blister...using a fly from South America...ground up and applied as a poultice on the chest. The skin would raise in a blister and the fever would go down, if the patient was still alive.

Many memories throng me as I write...of the old goose that laid eggs in the tanzy bed and flopped me if I went too near; of one pet dog, a white one named Curly; of Old Pidey who kicked me across the stable and knocked me unconscious, thinking I was the dog come to pull her tail; of relatives come visiting, and one little girl dropping my doll and breaking her; of a baby in a white casket wearing a white dress with blue bows down the front (a little sister who only lived five days) and my Mother crying so; but enough for now.

## MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.  
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00  
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

## Renewal      New

gift       life

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ZIP

IF GIFTS: From \_\_\_\_\_

Address

## MEMORIALS

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

## Comments

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RR# 8 Box 21, Grbg.  
Ph: 663-7121  
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2nd. V. Pres.....Virginia Carney  
Rec. Sec.....Lenore Bainbridge  
Cor. Sec.....Peg Miller  
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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

WINTER ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

JANUARY 1993

OCCASION: Thirty-Third Annual Dinner Meeting of the Historical Society of Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian Church, NE corner of the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Feb. 27 1993 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the church, \$6.00 each. Please reserve by check sent to Maurice Keith, 773 E. County Rd. 200 N, Greensburg. Deadline is the evening of Feb. 24th.

PROGRAM: "George Rogers Clark-Triumph to Tragedy".

George Rogers Clark, more likely than not, was the saviour of the American Revolution. His success came early and for most of his life he fought critics, politicians, and creditors. His life was the epitome of F. Scott Fitzgerald's statement: "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy".

Joe Westhafer will be the speaker, and Joe always puts on a good show. The meal will, no doubt, be out of this world. There will be a short business meeting, if you should have any suggestions as to improving the Society, bring them with you. This will be a great meeting, reserve early and avoid the crowd. Oh yes, bring a little extra cash to pay those dues.

\* \* \* \*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paul Somers

LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Steven Stradley

FALL MEETING was held at the local REMC with about twenty-five of the faithful in attendance. The program consisted of a slide presentation of Indiana Art Work narrated by Herb Scheidler. The art work included paintings, quilts, coverlets, glass & photographs. Dorothy Petty presented the Society with the minutes of the Evangelical United Brethren of Decatur & Ripley Countys circuit meetings from 1860-1892. Paul Somers, upon whose property stands the center of population monument, discussed the up-keep of said monument, wondering if the state or county could provide such. Hand made cookies and drinks were served, quite good cookies.

\* \* \* \*

ABOUT SMILEY FOWLER'S "SPEED SENSATIONS"

In Westport, one Sunday afternoon, I and some others while hunting through an auto junk yard was an antique car (a Winton I believe) that had a friction clutch with a leather covered disk on the fly-wheel and a leather covered rod to the drive shaft. The rod was at right angles to axis of the disk. A short length of rod pressed against the disk and could be moved up and down passing the exact center of the disk. Below this center the rod would be rotated to transmit a forward motion to the drive. The lower it was the more rapid the drive. Above the center the transmission was reversed. As the rod passed the disk center a short bit the rod was sprung away to make the drive neutral. I do not know if the engine was crosswise under the seat. Some antique cars were, and I don't know how the drive rod was connected to the drive shaft and to the rear axel. But surely it was only one of a kind.

(From a letter written by: Phil Deiwert)

ARE YOU A WITCH ?

Chances are in about 1 to 10 you may be a water witch, sometimes called dowsing, devining or rod walking.

The art of water witching goes back to the fifteenth century with hundreds of articles on the subject. The technique has not changed. The practitioner takes a forked branch of live wood ( almost any kind ) with a butt end; he grasps the end of the branches with his palms up, points the butt end up, bends the branches apart somewhat and walks to and fro to find a spot at which the butt end will describe an arc of 180 degrees and points to the ground. With this forked branch one will be able to locate under ground streams and estimate its depth.

Also I have been able to find field tile by bending two pieces of wire at a right angle and pointing the wires straight ahead, and when you get over the tile the wires will cross and be parallel with the tile.

Will it work ? If you have the power, the rod twists with a measurable force, strong enough to peel the bark off the rod and the skin off ones hand.

What is the feeling like ? If you are carrying a flexible cane fishing pole across a given area and suddenly the pole bends toward the ground - about like the pull of a half-pound bluegill. Pass the spot and the pole straightens up again.

When we were getting a water well dug a few years ago, the driller ask if the location has been witched? I said " no," and he said to make sure we find water he will witch it. Taking his pocket knife, he cut a branch from a maple tree in the front yard, and soon found where two underground streams crossed.

He told me to try and sure enough it worked for me and the strongest pull was where he had marked the spot. Others tried with no sucess. Then the driller said, "sometimes it works if we join hands". He was right as long as the inside hands were joined and each person held one branch of the rod with his outside hand the " non-witch" was a witch and got full power.

Why does the rod move ? Is it because of unconscious muscular activity, or mind reading feats? Is it like the fact that a magnet will make a piece of iron jump through air - but not a piece of copper? Is it like the fact that the homing pigeon will find its home? Perhaps someday, someone will be able to answer these questions. Yet witching remains a mystery today as it was years ago.

There are a few professional water witches in this county today and for a fee will come out and witch your well site.

EXCERPTS FROM OSCAR MILLER'S MEMOIRS

Speaking at Clarksburg

The next speech that I made was in company with William Goddard, who was the father of John W. Goddard. Those two men had been living in Washington, D.C., holding down good, fat offices while James C. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur were in office; but the election of Grover Cleveland had caused them to pack their trunks and come home to Greensburg. Mr. William Goddard and I were billed to speak at a Republican rally at the town of Clarksburg on Monday evening, October 29, 1888. I think that was the date. Mr. Goddard was a very tall man and wore a broadcloth Prince Albert coat and was a very fine looking gentleman of the old school of politicians. He had been in Washington, D.C., and had elbowed around with statesmen from all parts of the nation until he had acquired the tastes and gentility of Washington society. He did not wear a plug hat on our trip to Clarksburg, but when he was in Washington, I imagine he may have worn one on state and exclusive occasions. If he did, he certainly must have been a very striking figure when he went out to dine with other dignitaries at the famous DelMonico. He told me that the DelMonico was the finest eating establishment in Washington at the time. He was a very fine fellow to be with. Of course, he was considerably older than I was; and while there was quite a difference in our ages, I enjoyed his company exceedingly.

We drove up to the town in a buggy, and when we arrived they gave us a real fine reception. The improvised Clarksburg Band, which was largely composed of drums, big and little, and fifes, made plenty of noise. Everyone appeared to be happy and enjoying the occasion. When we went into the big school building, we were greeted by a large audience. We were also honored by the presence of quite a number of ladies. I do not now remember who the chairman was, but there was one man who was much in evidence, who busied himself by running about seating and taking care of the crowd in general. He proved to be Jeff Davis, who afterwards became sheriff of the county. When the audience quieted down, the chairman then made a few introductory remarks. He then introduced me to make the opening speech.

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I think we were pretty healthy, as a rule, but some times would have to have a doctor. Dr. Burroughs came to our home when needed. I remember once...I must have been sort of delirious, as the bed I was in kept going up nearly to the ceiling (so I thought), and I couldn't keep the medicine down...that Dr. Burroughs called for two flat irons. He put one on his lap, upside down, put a few drops of something made of flour and water on it, then a few drops of medicine, then more of the paste, and set the other iron, heated now, on the first, making a wafer. I was supposed to swallow that but I couldn't, even slick as it was. Dr. Burroughs would put his horse in the barn and stay all night with the patient. If anyone needed him they would come on horseback to find him. If we had "lung fever", as a last resort he would make a big fly blister...using a fly from South America...ground up and applied as a poultice on the chest. The skin would raise in a blister and the fever would go down, if the patient was still alive.

Many memories throng me as I write...of the old goose that laid eggs in the tanzy bed and flopped me if I went too near; of one pet dog, a white one named Curly; of Old Pidey who kicked me across the stable and knocked me unconscious, thinking I was the dog come to pull her tail; of relatives come visiting, and one little girl dropping my doll and breaking her; of a baby in a white casket wearing a white dress with blue bows down the front (a little sister who only lived five days) and my Mother crying so; but enough for now.

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P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00 Payable by January 1st.  
Life Membership \$100.00

Renewal       New       Gift       Life

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**In Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_ **Comments**

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2nd. V. Pres.....Virginia Carney  
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THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

WINTER ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

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George Rogers Clark, more likely than not, was the saviour of the American Revolution. His success came early and for most of his life he fought critics, politicians, and creditors. His life was the epitome of F. Scott Fitzgerald's statement: "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy".

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paul Somers

LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Steven Stradley

FALL MEETING was held at the local REMC with about twenty-five of the faithful in attendance. The program consisted of a slide presentation of Indiana Art Work narrated by Herb Scheidler. The art work included paintings, quilts, coverlets, glass & photographs. Dorothy Petty presented the Society with the minutes of the Evangelical United Brethren of Decatur & Ripley Countys circuit meetings from 1860-1892. Paul Somers, upon whose property stands the center of population monument, discussed the up-keep of said monument, wondering if the state or county could provide such. Hand made cookies and drinks were served, quite good cookies.

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ABOUT SMILEY FOWLER'S "SPEED SENSATIONS"

In Westport, one Sunday afternoon, I and some others while hunting through an auto junk yard was an antique car (a Winton I believe) that had a friction clutch with a leather covered disk on the fly-wheel and a leather covered rod to the drive shaft. The rod was at right angles to axis of the disk. A short length of rod pressed against the disk and could be moved up and down passing the exact center of the disk. Below this center the rod would be rotated to transmit a forward motion to the drive. The lower it was the more rapid the drive. Above the center the transmission was reversed. As the rod passed the disk center a short bit the rod was sprung away to make the drive neutral. I do not know if the engine was crosswise under the seat. Some antique cars were, and I don't know how the drive rod was connected to the drive shaft and to the rear axel. But surely it was only one of a kind.

(From a letter written by: Phil Deiwert)

ARE YOU A WITCH ?

Chances are in about 1 to 10 you may be a water witch, sometimes called dowsing, devining or rod walking.

The art of water witching goes back to the fifteenth century with hundreds of articles on the subject. The technique has not changed. The practitioner takes a forked branch of live wood ( almost any kind ) with a butt end; he grasps the end of the branches with his palms up, points the butt end up, bends the branches apart somewhat and walks to and fro to find a spot at which the butt end will describe an arc of 180 degrees and points to the ground. With this forked branch one will be able to locate under ground streams and estimate its depth.

Also I have been able to find field tile by bending two pieces of wire at a right angle and pointing the wires straight ahead, and when you get over the tile the wires will cross and be parallel with the tile.

Will it work ? If you have the power, the rod twists with a measurable force, strong enough to peel the bark off the rod and the skin off ones hand.

What is the feeling like ? If you are carrying a flexible cane fishing pole across a given area and suddenly the pole bends toward the ground - about like the pull of a half-pound bluegill. Pass the spot and the pole straightens up again.

When we were getting a water well dug a few years ago, the driller ask if the location has been witched? I said " no," and he said to make sure we find water he will witch it. Taking his pocket knife, he cut a branch from a maple tree in the front yard, and soon found where two underground streams crossed.

He told me to try and sure enough it worked for me and the strongest pull was where he had marked the spot. Others tried with no sucess. Then the driller said, "sometimes it works if we join hands". He was right as long as the inside hands were joined and each person held one branch of the rod with his outside hand the " non-witch" was a witch and got full power.

Why does the rod move ? Is it because of unconscious muscular activity, or mind reading feats? Is it like the fact that a magnet will make a piece of iron jump through air - but not a piece of copper? Is it like the fact that the homing pigeon will find its home? Perhaps someday, someone will be able to answer these questions. Yet witching remains a mystery today as it was years ago.

There are a few professional water witches in this county today and for a fee will come out and witch your well site.

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Speaking at Clarksburg

The next speech that I made was in company with William Goddard, who was the father of John W. Goddard. Those two men had been living in Washington, D.C., holding down good, fat offices while James C. Garfield and Chester A. Arthur were in office; but the election of Grover Cleveland had caused them to pack their trunks and come home to Greensburg. Mr. William Goddard and I were billed to speak at a Republican rally at the town of Clarksburg on Monday evening, October 29, 1888. I think that was the date. Mr. Goddard was a very tall man and wore a broadcloth Prince Albert coat and was a very fine looking gentleman of the old school of politicians. He had been in Washington, D.C., and had elbowed around with statesmen from all parts of the nation until he had acquired the tastes and gentility of Washington society. He did not wear a plug hat on our trip to Clarksburg, but when he was in Washington, I imagine he may have worn one on state and exclusive occasions. If he did, he certainly must have been a very striking figure when he went out to dine with other dignitaries at the famous DelMonico. He told me that the DelMonico was the finest eating establishment in Washington at the time. He was a very fine fellow to be with. Of course, he was considerably older than I was; and while there was quite a difference in our ages, I enjoyed his company exceedingly.

We drove up to the town in a buggy, and when we arrived they gave us a real fine reception. The improvised Clarksburg Band, which was largely composed of drums, big and little, and fifes, made plenty of noise. Everyone appeared to be happy and enjoying the occasion. When we went into the big school building, we were greeted by a large audience. We were also honored by the presence of quite a number of ladies. I do not now remember who the chairman was, but there was one man who was much in evidence, who busied himself by running about seating and taking care of the crowd in general. He proved to be Jeff Davis, who afterwards became sheriff of the county. When the audience quieted down, the chairman then made a few introductory remarks. He then introduced me to make the opening speech.

I started my speech by saying that I was unusually honored by being called out to make the first talk of the evening when I was in company with the eloquent and distinguished Mr. William Goddard, who had spent some years in the capitol city of Washington. I am quite sure the reason is that the honorable chairman desires to "keep the good wine for the last."

I had the theme of my speech pretty well committed. I said, "We hear a great deal about the tariff here lately. Not long ago I heard about a couple of fellows who were out hunting. They came up out of the woods and came to a railroad track. They were not used to railroads. They stood there a short time. Soon a Lightning Express came whizzing by. They stood in astonishment. When they had recovered from the exciting shock, one of them said, 'Bill, I bet you that was the Tarriff.'" The audience was kind enough to laugh at this anecdote and give me a due amount of applause.

I then said, "I now want to talk for a while about this protective tariff. I also want to talk about the miserable condition we have been brought into under the free trade fallacy as administered in Washington under Grover Cleveland." I then proceeded to a full argument, relating to the effects of free trade and its destructive tendency when applied to the business of the country, also the beneficent results that had been brought about by the high protective tariff as administered by the Republicans.

I must have consumed about one-half hour in discussing these issues somewhat in detail. I closed my talk by saying: "My dear folks, this matter will be very gloriously adjusted when we go to the polls in November. We will elect that great statesman from Indiana, the Honorable Benjamin Harrison." The mention of this man's name brought great and continued applause.

The chairman then stepped forward and said, "I now have the very great pleasure of introducing Hon. William Goddard of Greensburg, who will address you." Mr. Goddard stepped forward and was greeted with considerable applause. He was a very good speaker and deliberative in his opening remarks. After he got started, he spoke with more vim and made his points very good and effective. He also spoke considerably about the good results of the protective tariff. He said that the Democrats had changed their position several times in reference to the tariff. He said in the first place they had declared in favor of free trade, then at the next election they declared themselves in favor of tariff for revenue only, and now they had come back to their first love and declared for free trade. In fact, you couldn't tell just where they were. He said they put him in mind of a quack doctor he once heard of, who was explaining about food and how it went from the mouth to the stomach. This doctor said that all solid food went from the mouth into the throat where it struck a lid and then went on down on that side of this lid; and when liquids such as milk or coffee struck this lid, it raised and allowed the liquids to go down on the other side, thus separating the liquids from solid food. Someone who had been listening to this quack spoke up and said, "I think that in eating mush and milk, it certainly would make a hell of a lot of flipping and flopping." Goddard then said that was the way of the Democrats - they changed their minds so often that it did produce a lot of flipping and flopping, and it was hard to tell just where they would flop to in the next election. He said, "At present, as Mr. Miller has explained to you, they have got back and now declare themselves in favor of complete free trade. Now if Grover Cleveland gets back again into power, it is hard to tell what a mess he may make of it, or how much flipping and flopping may go on."

Mr. Goddard made a very fine speech and talked about one hour. He carried the attention of his audience with interest and attention. When we returned to Greensburg the chairman said he was quite well pleased from the reports of the meeting that he had received from some people who were there. He also told us that the committee wanted us to go down to the town of Westport on the following Tuesday, which would be October 30, 1888.

The campaign was now considerably advanced, and the Republicans were wanting to lose no time or leave no stone unturned in order to carry the oncoming election. Mr. Goddard was also very much interested in the results, as I think he wanted to get back to Washington, the city he had grown to like very much. Mr. Goddard and I talked the matter over, and we consented to go. At once large posters were put up, and the meeting was duly announced. I think that my friend, James Kennedy, the county auditor, was also much interested in the results, as he wanted to control that office for another four year term. He told me he had a very valuable political henchman down there in that "neck of the woods" who could do him a lot of good. He said his name was Jap Patterson, who carried about 50 votes around in his vest pocket, and he wanted to encourage him by having a lively meeting down in that vicinity.

When Mr. Goddard and I arrived down there, the town was pretty well filled up by people who had driven in from the hills and farms of Jackson and Sandcreek Townships. There were no saloons in the town, but from the way some of the boys acted, I concluded that they must have had a little liquer that had been saved over from the Democratic rally of the previous week. There was considerable enthusiasm by the crowd. The Westport band rendered a few pieces that from the point of volume much outclassed the harmony of music.

I will not attempt to go into full details of this meeting. It was much the same as the one at Clarksburg, Mr. Goddard was at his best, and aquitted himself very handsomely. He was a very imposing figure as he stood straight up in his long Prince Albert coat, made of fine broadcloth. He was fully six feet tall. He was also a good speaker. I thought as he prodeed that he improved in telling his mush and milk and flip-flop anecdote. He talked about an hour, and I thought was rather effective. I wound up the meeting by talking about one-half hour; and as no one walked out on me, I thought the crowd received my argument with considerable interest. I talked nearly altogether about the tariff, which was the main issue of the campaign. I prefaced my talk with some reference to the great achievements of Governor Benjamin Harrison, who would soon be our next president. The name of Harrison always brought forth a vigorous applause. We met a lot of people, and as we went home, we felt the meeting had had some good effect, and we congratulated ourselves by the great enthusiasm displayed by the people who were there.

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From: "I Remember" by: Elizabeth Robbins Davis

#### MY FIRST HOME

I remember my first home, where I was born, as a four room, partly log structure. The rooms were kitchen, summer-kitchen, living room, and a spare room.

Our nicest room was this "spare room" at the southwest side of the house. It had a nice rag carpet, curtains, a company bed with nice white spread, a tall desk, an organ, a horsehair covered settee with two matching chairs. From the ceiling was suspended a bead basket...all color beads...and all lengths and sizes.... a beautiful thing, a gift from the Ballieu relatives in LA. This room faced west, with a door and a walk leading to a gate in the

picket fence.

North of the spare room was the living room, also facing west with a door and a walk leading to the gate. Here was an enormous fireplace on the north; beds in the south west and south east corners of the room. One was a "little bed", we called it, and we children slept in it. If we were afraid in the night there was always the chance to cross the room and crawl in with Ma and Pa and scoot down to the foot of the bed and feel so secure. A small square table stood under a window in the northwest corner. There was a big closet on each side of the fireplace, and a place to pile up firewood. On the northeast side stood a bureau, the one Faith has now. In one drawer was kept asaphoedita, from which to make bags to wear around our necks to keep away disease. I don't think my folks ever believed it would, but it was the custom. Directly in the corner was the gun that my father used to kill hogs, and to fire off on the 4th of July and sometimes Christmas. I would get my head covered when I knew he was going to use it, and then maybe pull the covers down at the exact time it went off...a "scared-cat"!

This living room also had a rag carpet. In the winter my mother tore rags for carpets, and in the spring they were sent to the old weaver, Mrs. Lucky, for weaving. Then Mother would remove the tacks and take out the old carpet for a good beating, later using it in the kitchen. Fresh straw went on the floor, then the new carpet was tacked down. She would also put new straw into the straw ticks under the feather beds, so that we could hardly climb in at night. Lots of people had bugs in their beds, but we never did at our house.

The other rooms on the north east side were the summer-kitchen and a winter kitchen, with cook stove, eating table, cupboards for dishes and pots and pans, a place for a wash pan (or bath), and a bucket of water ready.

There were some smaller buildings outside, the wood house, the milk house, with a cement trough for cool water, so that crocks of milk could be set in and kept cool and sweet, till ready to skim and churn for butter to use and sell. There was a good sized barn, mostly log, in which to keep livestock and tools. There was an enormous box we called the granary, and, risking a good scolding, we would climb in it and play.

For recreation, there was a sand pile, a sliding board, (just a wide board leaned against the board fence, which we wore slick at the expense of our shoe soles and the seats of our pants.) There was plenty of room to run and play, a big apple orchard, cherries to pick, gooseberries, etc. A lane lead to a small pond where we and the pigs liked to play, where one day Cordia and I were walking around the edge and I slipped in. Cordia pulled me out by the hair of my head, and Mother scolded her, because I was five years younger than she, and she should have taken care of me, (so Mother said).

It was the custom for every child to have her ears pierced. So, when I was five years old, I was persuaded to let Mother pierce mine. The process was to rub the lower part of the ear

until it was numb, then to put a ball of white yarn back of the ear, and using a small sharp needle (which had been sterilized over a candle flame), threaded with white silk thread, gently put the needle through the ear, pulling the thread through and tying it under the ear. This thread was left until the hole healed, pulling it back and forth often so the hole in the ear would not grow up. Mother got one pierced, but then I decided I didn't want the other done, as it did hurt some, which I had been told it wouldn't, so I ran up the lane and it took lots of coaxing to get me back.....and the promise of gold earrings very soon. The next Christmas I did get the earrings, gold, in blue cotton in a little blue trunk, and wore them many years.

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We drove up to the town in a buggy, and when we arrived they gave us a real fine reception. The improvised Clarksburg Band, which was largely composed of drums, big and little, and fifes, made plenty of noise. Everyone appeared to be happy and enjoying the occasion. When we went into the big school building, we were greeted by a large audience. We were also honored by the presence of quite a number of ladies. I do not now remember who the chairman was, but there was one man who was much in evidence, who busied himself by running about seating and taking care of the crowd in general. He proved to be Jeff Davis, who afterwards became sheriff of the county. When the audience quieted down, the chairman then made a few introductory remarks. He then introduced me to make the opening speech.

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I must have consumed about one-half hour in discussing these issues somewhat in detail. I closed my talk by saying: "My dear folks, this matter will be very gloriously adjusted when we go to the polls in November. We will elect that great statesman from Indiana, the Honorable Benjamin Harrison." The mention of this man's name brought great and continued applause.

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From: "I Remember" by: Elizabeth Robbins Davis

#### MY FIRST HOME

I remember my first home, where I was born, as a four room, partly log structure. The rooms were kitchen, summer-kitchen, living room, and a spare room.

Our nicest room was this "spare room" at the southwest side of the house. It had a nice rag carpet, curtains, a company bed with nice white spread, a tall desk, an organ, a horsehair covered settee with two matching chairs. From the ceiling was suspended a bead basket...all color beads...and all lengths and sizes.... a beautiful thing, a gift from the Ballieu relatives in LA. This room faced west, with a door and a walk leading to a gate in the

picket fence.

North of the spare room was the living room, also facing west with a door and a walk leading to the gate. Here was an enormous fireplace on the north; beds in the south west and south east corners of the room. One was a "little bed", we called it, and we children slept in it. If we were afraid in the night there was always the chance to cross the room and crawl in with Ma and Pa and scoot down to the foot of the bed and feel so secure. A small square table stood under a window in the northwest corner. There was a big closet on each side of the fireplace, and a place to pile up firewood. On the northeast side stood a bureau, the one Faith has now. In one drawer was kept asaphoedita, from which to make bags to wear around our necks to keep away disease. I don't think my folks ever believed it would, but it was the custom. Directly in the corner was the gun that my father used to kill hogs, and to fire off on the 4th of July and sometimes Christmas. I would get my head covered when I knew he was going to use it, and then maybe pull the covers down at the exact time it went off...a "scared-cat"!

This living room also had a rag carpet. In the winter my mother tore rags for carpets, and in the spring they were sent to the old weaver, Mrs. Lucky, for weaving. Then Mother would remove the tacks and take out the old carpet for a good beating, later using it in the kitchen. Fresh straw went on the floor, then the new carpet was tacked down. She would also put new straw into the straw ticks under the feather beds, so that we could hardly climb in at night. Lots of people had bugs in their beds, but we never did at our house.

The other rooms on the north east side were the summer-kitchen and a winter kitchen, with cook stove, eating table, cupboards for dishes and pots and pans, a place for a wash pan (or bath), and a bucket of water ready.

There were some smaller buildings outside, the wood house, the milk house, with a cement trough for cool water, so that crocks of milk could be set in and kept cool and sweet, till ready to skim and churn for butter to use and sell. There was a good sized barn, mostly log, in which to keep livestock and tools. There was an enormous box we called the granary, and, risking a good scolding, we would climb in it and play.

For recreation, there was a sand pile, a sliding board, (just a wide board leaned against the board fence, which we wore slick at the expense of our shoe soles and the seats of our pants.) There was plenty of room to run and play, a big apple orchard, cherries to pick, gooseberries, etc. A lane lead to a small pond where we and the pigs liked to play, where one day Cordia and I were walking around the edge and I slipped in. Cordia pulled me out buy the hair of my head, and Mother scolded her, because I was five years younger than she, and she should have taken care of me, (so Mother said).

It was the custom for every child to have her ears pierced. So, when I was five years old, I was persuaded to let Mother pierce mine. The process was to rub the lower part of the ear

until it was numb, then to put a ball of white yarn back of the ear, and using a small sharp needle (which had been sterilized over a candle flame), threaded with white silk thread, gently put the needle through the ear, pulling the thread through and tying it under the ear. This thread was left until the hole healed, pulling it back and forth often so the hole in the ear would not grow up. Mother got one pierced, but then I decided I didn't want the other done, as it did hurt some, which I had been told it wouldn't, so I ran up the lane and it took lots of coaxing to get me back.....and the promise of gold earrings very soon. The next Christmas I did get the earrings, gold, in blue cotton in a little blue trunk, and wore them many years.

I think we were pretty healthy, as a rule, but some times would have to have a doctor. Dr. Burroughs came to our home when needed. I remember once...I must have been sort of delirious, as the bed I was in kept going up nearly to the ceiling (so I thought), and I couldn't keep the medicine down...that Dr. Burroughs called for two flat irons. He put one on his lap, upside down, put a few drops of something made of flour and water on it, then a few drops of medicine, then more of the paste, and set the other iron, heated now, on the first, making a wafer. I was supposed to swallow that but I couldn't, even slick as it was. Dr. Burroughs would put his horse in the barn and stay all night with the patient. If anyone needed him they would come on horseback to find him. If we had "lung fever", as a last resort he would make a big fly blister...using a fly from South America...ground up and applied as a poultice on the chest. The skin would raise in a blister and the fever would go down, if the patient was still alive.

Many memories throng me as I write...of the old goose that laid eggs in the tanzy bed and flopped me if I went too near; of one pet dog, a white one named Curly; of Old Pidey who kicked me across the stable and knocked me unconscious, thinking I was the dog come to pull her tail; of relatives come visiting, and one little girl dropping my doll and breaking her; of a baby in a white casket wearing a white dress with blue bows down the front (a little sister who only lived five days) and my Mother crying so; but enough for now.

\* \* \* \* \* MEMBERSHIPS and MEMORIALS

Historical Society of Decatur County, Inc.  
P.O. Box 163 Greensburg, IN. 47240

Yearly Membership \$5.00  
Life Membership \$100.00

Payable by January 1st.

Renewal       New

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In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_ Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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RR# 8 Box 21, Grbg.  
Ph: 663-7121  
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2nd. V. Pres.....Virginia Carney  
Rec. Sec.....Lenore Bainbridge  
Cor. Sec.....Peg Miller  
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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

WINTER ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

JANUARY 1993

OCCASION: Thirty-Third Annual Dinner Meeting of the Historical Society of Decatur County.

PLACE: Greensburg Presbyterian Church, NE corner of the Courthouse Square.

DATE: Saturday evening, Feb. 27 1993 at 6:30 P.M.

DINNER: By the ladies of the church, \$6.00 each. Please reserve by check sent to Maurice Keith, 773 E. County Rd. 200 N, Greensburg. Deadline is the evening of Feb. 24th.

PROGRAM: "George Rogers Clark-Triumph to Tragedy".

George Rogers Clark, more likely than not, was the saviour of the American Revolution. His success came early and for most of his life he fought critics, politicians, and creditors. His life was the epitome of F. Scott Fitzgerald's statement: "Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy".

Joe Westhafer will be the speaker, and Joe always puts on a good show. The meal will, no doubt, be out of this world. There will be a short business meeting, if you should have any suggestions as to improving the Society, bring them with you. This will be a great meeting, reserve early and avoid the crowd. Oh yes, bring a little extra cash to pay those dues.

\* \* \* \*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Paul Somers

LIFE MEMBERS

Dr. Steven Stradley

FALL MEETING was held at the local REMC with about twenty-five of the faithful in attendance. The program consisted of a slide presentation of Indiana Art Work narrated by Herb Scheidler. The art work included paintings, quilts, coverlets, glass & photographs. Dorothy Petty presented the Society with the minutes of the Evangelical United Brethren of Decatur & Ripley Countys circuit meetings from 1860-1892. Paul Somers, upon whose property stands the center of population monument, discussed the up-keep of said monument, wondering if the state or county could provide such. Hand made cookies and drinks were served, quite good cookies.

\* \* \* \*  
ABOUT SMILEY FOWLER'S  
"SPEED SENSATIONS"

In Westport, one Sunday afternoon, I and some others while hunting through an auto junk yard was an antique car (a Winton I believe) that had a friction clutch with a leather covered disk on the fly-wheel and a leather covered rod to the drive shaft. The rod was at right angles to axis of the disk. A short length of rod pressed against the disk and could be moved up and down passing the exact center of the disk. Below this center the rod would be rotated to transmit a forward motion to the drive. The lower it was the more rapid the drive. Above the center the transmission was reversed. As the rod passed the disk center a short bit the rod was sprung away to make the drive neutral. I do not know if the engine was crosswise under the seat. Some antique cars were, and I don't know how the drive rod was connected to the drive shaft and to the rear axel. But surely it was only one of a kind.

(From a letter written by: Phil Deiwert)

ARE YOU A WITCH ?

Chances are in about 1 to 10 you may be a water witch, sometimes called dowsing, devining or rod walking.

The art of water witching goes back to the fifteenth century with hundreds of articles on the subject. The technique has not changed. The practitioner takes a forked branch of live wood (almost any kind) with a butt end; he grasps the end of the branches with his palms up, points the butt end up, bends the branches apart somewhat and walks to and fro to find a spot at which the butt end will describe an arc of 180 degrees and points to the ground. With this forked branch one will be able to locate under ground streams and estimate its depth.

Also I have been able to find field tile by bending two pieces of wire at a right angle and pointing the wires straight ahead, and when you get over the tile the wires will cross and be parallel with the tile.

Will it work ? If you have the power, the rod twists with a measurable force, strong enough to peel the bark off the rod and the skin off ones hand.

What is the feeling like ? If you are carrying a flexible cane fishing pole across a given area and suddenly the pole bends toward the ground - about like the pull of a half-pound bluegill. Pass the spot and the pole straightens up again.

When we were getting a water well dug a few years ago, the driller ask if the location has been witched? I said "no," and he said to make sure we find water he will witch it. Taking his pocket knife, he cut a branch from a maple tree in the front yard, and soon found where two underground streams crossed.

He told me to try and sure enough it worked for me and the strongest pull was where he had marked the spot. Others tried with no sucess. Then the driller said, "sometimes it works if we join hands". He was right as long as the inside hands were joined and each person held one branch of the rod with his outside hand the "non-witch" was a witch and got full power.

Why does the rod move ? Is it because of unconscious muscular activity, or mind reading feats? Is it like the fact that a magnet will make a piece of iron jump through air - but not a piece of copper? Is it like the fact that the homing pigeon will find its home? Perhaps someday, someone will be able to answer these questions. Yet witching remains a mystery today as it was years ago.

There are a few professional water witches in this county today and for a fee will come out and witch your well site.

EXCERPTS FROM OSCAR MILLER'S MEMOIRS

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The other rooms on the north east side were the summer-kitchen and a winter kitchen, with cook stove, eating table, cupboards for dishes and pots and pans, a place for a wash pan (or bath), and a bucket of water ready.

There were some smaller buildings outside, the wood house, the milk house, with a cement trough for cool water, so that crocks of milk could be set in and kept cool and sweet, till ready to skim and churn for butter to use and sell. There was a good sized barn, mostly log, in which to keep livestock and tools. There was an enormous box we called the granary, and, risking a good scolding, we would climb in it and play.

For recreation, there was a sand pile, a sliding board, (just a wide board leaned against the board fence, which we wore slick at the expense of our shoe soles and the seats of our pants.) There was plenty of room to run and play, a big apple orchard, cherries to pick, gooseberries, etc. A lane lead to a small pond where we and the pigs liked to play, where one day Cordia and I were walking around the edge and I slipped in. Cordia pulled me out by the hair of my head, and Mother scolded her, because I was five years younger than she, and she should have taken care of me, (so Mother said).

It was the custom for every child to have her ears pierced. So, when I was five years old, I was persuaded to let Mother pierce mine. The process was to rub the lower part of the ear

until it was numb, then to put a ball of white yarn back of the ear, and using a small sharp needle (which had been sterilized over a candle flame), threaded with white silk thread, gently put the needle through the ear, pulling the thread through and tying it under the ear. This thread was left until the hole healed, pulling it back and forth often so the hole in the ear would not grow up. Mother got one pierced; but then I decided I didn't want the other done, as it did hurt some, which I had been told it wouldn't, so I ran up the lane and it took lots of coaxing to get me back.....and the promise of gold earrings very soon. The next Christmas I did get the earrings, gold, in blue cotton in a little blue trunk, and wore them many years.

I think we were pretty healthy, as a rule, but some times would have to have a doctor. Dr. Burroughs came to our home when needed. I remember once...I must have been sort of delirious, as the bed I was in kept going up nearly to the ceiling (so I thought), and I couldn't keep the medicine down...that Dr. Burroughs called for two flat irons. He put one on his lap, upside down, put a few drops of something made of flour and water on it, then a few drops of medicine, then more of the paste, and set the other iron, heated now, on the first, making a wafer. I was supposed to swallow that but I couldn't, even slick as it was. Dr. Burroughs would put his horse in the barn and stay all night with the patient. If anyone needed him they would come on horseback to find him. If we had "lung fever", as a last resort he would make a big fly blister...using a fly from South America...ground up and applied as a poultice on the chest. The skin would raise in a blister and the fever would go down, if the patient was still alive.

Many memories throng me as I write...of the old goose that laid eggs in the tanzy bed and flopped me if I went too near; of one pet dog, a white one named Curly; of Old Pidey who kicked me across the stable and knocked me unconscious, thinking I was the dog come to pull her tail; of relatives come visiting, and one little girl dropping my doll and breaking her; of a baby in a white casket wearing a white dress with blue bows down the front (a little sister who only lived five days) and my Mother crying so; but enough for now.

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In Memory of

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/THE BULLETIN/  
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

SPRING ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

APRIL, 1993

OCCASION: Spring Meeting

PLACE: Presbyterian Church base-  
ment.

DATE: Sunday, May 16, 1993 at  
1:30 P.M.

PROGRAM: The program for this meeting will be a slide show of old post cards of this area along with some views taken by the former Beck's Studio back in the 1920s. We would like every one to come, and if possible bring an old photograph to display during the meeting. The Society would like to make slides of old pictures to add to the collection at the Museum, & to be used in programs. Don Marlin, a local product, has suggest this, & is doing most of the photographic work. Be sure to attend this interesting show, & bring some old pictures.

\* \* \* \* \*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joseph D. Welage - Greenfield, IN

MEMORIALS

In memory of Christina F. Small from her cousin, Mrs. Charles Scott

In memory of Christina F. Small from Helen Marlin

GIFTS

From Mrs. Welby M. (Frances) Frantz

From Lone Tree Chapter DAR in the name of Pat Smith

Sunday School Class of the Christian Church

Nurses' Group

\* \* \* \* \*

Remember When? from Indpls. News

The doctor made house calls?

Cakes were made from scratch?

(continued in next column)

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING was held at the Presbyterian Church the evening of Feb. 27 with a friendly crowd of Society members present. Joe Westhafer, local historian, gave a fine program about the life of George Rogers Clark entitled "George Rogers Clark-Triumph to Tragedy", very well done. During a short business meeting, John Westhafer, Circuit Judge, was elected president of the Society. We wish him well in the coming years. Several new faces appear on the roster of officers which are listed on the last page of this affair. The members would like to thank Rheadawn Metz for her time & trouble in guiding the organization during the past several years. The women of the church are to be congratulated on producing such a tasty meal. It was a great addition to an enjoyable evening.

\* \* \* \* \*

OFFICERS & TRUSTEES of the Society got together Mar. 22 to discuss programs for the coming year. It was decided to have a booth at the coming 4H fair to give the organization a little publicity. The Society is in need of new members, keep this in mind as you circulate around. The Officers would like to thank Delta Faucet for their generosity in printing the bulletin the past several years & hope they are able to find their way clear to continue this help.

\* \* \* \* \*

(continued from first column)

You had to dress up for school?

You had point-tipped ink pens & ink wells?

Mail was delivered twice a day?

Rooms at the Lincoln, Claypool, and

Severin rented for \$2 a night?

Grandma never had to baby sit?

The Omar Bakery truck delivered "goodies" to your door?

A brick was heated to warm the bed?

All students walked to their neighborhood school and went home for lunch?

From: "I Remember" by: Elizabeth Robbins Davis

OLD SETTLERS MEETING

I remember the "Old Settlers Meeting", which grew to be a famous institution in the county and perhaps the state at the turn of the century. It was started by Zack Boicourt as a day to honor the older men and women, and grew to be an event lasting several days. A gift was given to the oldest man and woman, and Clifford's grandmother, Mildred Barrett, won the title several times.

It was held in a woods just across the field from where I lived. There were good programs, and people came from many miles in great numbers. For the week preceding it, the woods was a very interesting place, especially for children of the community. Booths and a "speaker stand" were erected. The band and merry-go-round came in to get located and advertise the affair with lots of free rides to test the equipment. One day was especially good, with great speakers, a balloon ascension, and lots of special attractions, antiques, etc.

One year the Governor of Indiana came on invitation, and of course drew a big crowd. Another year the big attraction was Carrie Nation, the great temperance advocate, still carrying her little hatchet.

Since we lived close, it was common for friends and relatives to try to get invited to stay overnight at the "Robbins Nest" so they could attend the next day. Our house was always crowded, with bed space and even floor space at a premium. Always there was lunch to fix to take to the woods for the "notables". A really big time!

\* \* \* \* \*

CONTINUED: RECOLLECTIONS OF GREENSBURG DATING BACK TO YEAR 1846

Royal P. Cobb, an attorney, built the house now occupied by the Telephone company. A one-story brick house just north of this was the millinery shop of Miss Eliza and Miss Ann Thompson. "They were splendid milliners, could bleach and block bonnets most satisfactorily." Some will remember this house as the home of Brutus Hamilton. The Lathrop home, now owned by Mrs. Margaret Shannon, was a one-story building. It was built by John Scobey and later John Stewart lived there and remodeled it.

She also recalled the building of homes as the town grew, together with the names of the builders. These as we see are among some of the substantial homes of Greensburg.

Mr. Ira Grover, father of Marshall and Col. Ira Grover, lived in a small three-room frame building on the lot where the new post office is being built. This home gave place to the two-story brick (the one demolished for the new post office building) which David Lovett had built for his daughter, Mrs. Sam Christy.

Harvey Lathrop lived in a small house across the street, which was later replaced by the two-story brick, now Mrs. Cooke's boarding house. This house was also built by David Lovett for another daughter, Mrs. Lee Lathrop.

A. R. Forsythe built the large grey brick now known as the Christian home. On this site there had been a brick building which was even with the street where a Mr. Randall operated a pottery. She never tired of watching him at work, as he turned his potter's wheel and with his hands deftly fashioned the various pieces of pottery. It was a favorite visiting place for the children as they went to and from school.

William Freeman, brother of Lafe Freeman and son of James, lived in the house later purchased by Governor Cumback. This house was moved to South Franklin street to give place to the new home late remodeled by Thomas Greene, now the home of Joe Miller. Milt Siling built the brick house on North Franklin now owned and occupied by Mrs. Lissa Meek. This house was built before Ed Siling was born.

The Chal Robison house was built by a man named Taylor, a relative of Jacob Forsythe. Ed Nutting bought it from him and later sold it to the Reverend Joseph R. Walker.

The Presbyterian parsonage was built during the pastorate of the Reverend John C. Irwin, in 1869.

Mace Warthin built the home of Mrs. Fannie Moss, and the Huber home next door was built by B. B. Harris, who sold it to Lafe Freeman.

W. W. Lowe built the R.A. McCoy home on North Broadway and North Street.

Rice Cobb, a brother of Royal Cobb built the brick house on the I. O. O. F. grounds, which is now used as a girls dormitory.

Chatfield Howell lived where is now the Thomas Davidson home. He had a tanning yard across the street on the site of the Charles Zoller residence.

Mrs. Thomson attended her first school in the basement of the Presbyterian church. Her teacher was Camilla Thomson. This was a private or subscription school -- there were no public schools at this time. She also attended school in a log school house on North Broadway in front of where now stands the barn of Mrs. Harry Woodfill. The furnishings of the school room were very primitive--the benches were made of split logs with pegs for legs, there were no desks of any description. Miss Martha Gageby, daughter of David Gageby and a niece of James Gageby, the cabinet maker, was the teacher in this school. David Gageby died of "winter fever" which is now known as pneumonia.

Another school she attended was on West Washington street and on the site of the Batterton home. This was a one-room house. It was also a subscription school and was taught by Mrs. Lizzie Luther, a sister of the Rev. Benjamin Nyce.

Again the school was held in the basement of the Presbyterian church and she remembers day after day sitting in school and listening to the work on the new court-house--the continual sound of the dressing of the stone rang in her ears all through the day.

During the pastorate of the Rev. Joseph Monfort, there was a plan to found a boarding school in Greensburg after the fashion of Mount Holyoke. The site of the DeArmond hotel was purchased by the Presbyterian church, but the plan failed as they were unable to finance it. During the time when the building was owned by the Presbyterian church a Miss Parsons, who was a teacher here, would take her class to study on an upper back porch of this building. It was a cool, breezy spot and a pleasant change from the hot schoolroom. Miss Parsons was an eastern lady and was a graduate of Mt. Holyoke College. She was later a teacher in Oxford, Ohio.

The Presbyterian church was on its present location, facing Washington street instead of Franklin.

There were office rooms on the east side of the entrance in the basement or ground floor. Dr. Moody had an office in the southeast corner. The occupant of

the one on the southwest corner has been forgotten, although Dr. Cook, father of Mrs. Grover and Miss Julia Cook occupied it later.

As we have said, the Christian church was situated on the northwest corner of Railroad street and Broadway, and was just across from the Holby home. The bell was not in a belfry, but was on a frame work of four posts out at the corner in front of the church, and she remembers seeing them come out to ring the bell.

The Methodist church was on North Franklin, now the location of the Methodist parsonage. The building is remembered by many today. Mrs. Thomson tells of attending a revival meeting in the second building of the Methodist church where now stands the Masonic Temple, going one night with some girl friends. Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Woodward, the parents of the late Charles Woodward were in attendance this night and Charles, their eldest child, was a baby in arms. During the services Mrs. Woodward responded to the invitation of the minister and went forward to the mourners bench. A young girl who lived in their home was made very happy by this occurrence and proceeded to jump up and down, shouting and waving her arms wildly. The church was lighted by candles placed on upright posts. These standards were fastened to the ends of the pews on each side of the middle aisle, three lights on either side.

She remarked that her only remembrance of the service was this occurrence and the fear that the candle by the side of the happy girl would be overturned and a catastrophe occur.

Her first recollection of the county fair was in '50 or '51 when it was held on what is now East Central avenue. This was not far from their country home, and she remembers walking in to the fair. Another fair was held south of the Dickerson home beyond the railroad. She recalls the display of fruits and vegetables, bread, cake, butter, etc., also many quilts and other fancy work. Then there was the stock of all classes and there were races, too.

Speaking of the trip when moving to Greensburg she said there was some corduroy road which was necessary when passing through low or swampy ground, then plank road was later substituted. The road was just a track cut through a dense growth of timber and the riding was often rough. They sat on chairs in the wagon--one can imagine the discomfort compared with the transportation of today.

Greensburg's first cemetery was located on the site of Doles's Mill. When a larger burying-ground was found necessary, and a permanent location was decided upon South Park cemetery was laid out and the bodies were removed from the early site to that of South Park. A small sister of Mrs. Thomson's was one of the bodies moved.

The first cookstove was purchased in Jeffersonville before moving to Greensburg, and was the style known as the step-stove--the hearth formed the lower or first step, the fire box the second step and the upper part with cooking space still one step higher. This stove was in use until 1853. The oven was below. Helping dip candles was one of the necessary duties in the home. She also spun on the big wheel and wove carpets, but did not weave cloth. She also helped her father in planting time, dropping corn and then replanting and then thinning corn later when necessary. However, she did little work out-of-doors--she helped her mother in the home with the various duties which we have already recounted.

Mrs. Thomson will be ninety-three years old on June 3.

(Read Historical Society Meeting, May 13, 1932.)

## GOODBYE INDIANA

By: Kate Sharp Jones

Kate Sharp Jones, dau. of Zobeda Robbins, dau. of Nathaniel and Nancy Robbins who left Sandcreek Township, Decatur Co., Indiana in Oct. 1851 for the Willamette Valley, Clackamus Co., Oregon Territory.

Zobeda Robbins married William Sharp, a driver on this wagon train. They were the parents of Mrs. Kate Sharp Jones. She told me she wrote this about 50 years ago. Since she gave me this in 1968, I feel it was around 1918 or 1920. Most of the information was related to her by Minerva Hamilton Robbins, widow of James Robbins who were with the emigrating train.

After James died, Minerva came to live with Zobeda and William Sharp. From Aunt Kate I presume that Zobeda was the one who always took every one in when they needed help. When my great grandmother, Nancy Robbins Barstow, died when my grandmother was only two years old, it was Zobeda who took the children into her home. I have heard that Zobeda would sit in her little rocking chair and rock and smoke her pipe.

It was throu this history of Aunt Kate's and the knowledge of Stella and Clarence Vorheis of Portland, Oregon (Stella is 1st cousin of my mother), that I started on my search of my family.

--Margaret Davis, 1969

## GOODBYE INDIANA

Early one morning in October, 1851, the family of Dr. Nathaniel Robbins was seated around the breakfast table. It was to be their last breakfast in the comfortable big kitchen on their Indiana home.

For on this day they were leaving it -- leaving to join the great Westward Emigration that was slowly winding its way over mountains, plains and deserts toward the land of great promise; the Oregon Country -- where they hoped to find and make new homes for themselves, homes that might in time prove to be even more prosperous and comfortable than the ones they were leaving.

A hearty meal had been prepared that morning by Zobeda and Nancy the two younger daughters.

A good old Hoosier family breakfast of griddle cakes with buckwheat, honey fresh from the hive, sweet potatoes and home made sausages.

Jane, third daughter of the family, hovered around the table, filling the heavy mugs with fresh, sweet milk, urging them all to eat a good hearty breakfast. "You are going to need it, she said, there is a long hard day ahead of us", she warned, though she ate nothing herself.

However, in spite of her warning the meal was eaten rather hurriedly and for the most part in silence. Norval, 17 yrs. old and the youngest boy, ate only a few mouthfuls, then pushed back his chair, and left the table.

Taking his hat from a peg near the door, he danced a few steps around the kitchen, whistling a lively tune.

"Don't forget to bring my fiddle", he called to the girls as he scooted out through the open door.

"What is Norval so excited about"? Nancy Robbins asked, eyeing her husband and suspiciously. "I didn't notice that he was unusually excited," he answered her. "Probably in a hurry to get his cattle yoked up".

"Do you mean to say you have given that boy permission to drive a team of oxen all the way across the plains", she asked, looking worried. "I mean to say, he is going to make the attempt, and I think he will succeed very well". "He will be a full fledged bull-whacker, by the time we have crossed the great mountains", he assured her, laughing at her concern.

"Norve is playing a part this morning, with that gay air of his". "In fact, I think we all are", Jane whispered to Amanda. "I don't think any of us are feeling particularly happy about leaving this old home", she said dabbing at her eyes with her handkerchief.

Out in front all was noise and hub-bub. Ox yokes clanging, the cattle bawling to one another as they were driven into their places in front of the great covered wagons. The drivers shouting, and bantering one another with jokes.

Old Watch, the family dog, was running around in circles, barking and behaving very much like a puppy dog, for only that morning. Norval had patted his head and assured him he was not to be left behind.

Already the neighbors and relatives were gathering in. Riding up on their horses, or in wagons or surreys. Coming to bid Good-bye, and wish them God-speed.

As soon as she had finished eating her breakfast, Nancy Robbins arose from the table. "Well girls", she said, "There is still a lot to be done before we start". "The breakfast dishes must be gathered up and washed, then pack them up carefully; there is a rough road ahead, and we can't have them broken".

"I'll go to my room and do some more packing". So saying she went into her bedroom, closing the door behind her. She gazed around at the white painted walls, at the ruffled curtains blowing in the breeze from the open window. She stood for a moment beside the massive four-poster bed with it's pretty blue and white coverlet. All the heavy walnut furniture must be left behind. The wagons should not be loaded down with it. All the quilts, feather mattresses, and pillows made of feathers from the geese she had raised, she was taking. In this room all their children excepting the three oldest, had been born. She had nursed them, had coddled them, everyone, until they were old enough to sleep in the trundle beds. Thus, one chapter of her life was closed. Perhaps she was thinking of this as she started her packing.

At last all seemed to be ready. The last loads had been placed in the wagons.

Halley, Zobeda and Nancy walked together down the hard-beaten path to the old well, in a far corner of the yard. It was shaded by the huge branches of a sycamore. They drew fresh bucket of cold sparkling water, and drank from the gourd dipper. They thought of how they had often inwardly rebelled at having to carry heavy pails of water along this path. "Well, we shall never have to carry another pail of water from this old well", Nancy said, and Nancy was crying.

Out in front twenty-two white covered wagons stood waiting in line. The cattle, sleek, young and full of life were mooing at one another, and getting restless. How little they knew of how they would reach the end of the long journey ahead, tired

and weary, with drooping heads and feet worn out and bleeding.

With the short quick stride that had never failed her, Nancy Robbins walked down the winding stone path to the gate. Turning she gazed for a moment at the big white house, with its wide porch and balcony -- then at the sun flowers and hollyhocks along the paling fence. The air was sweet with the scent of the wallflowers around the house, primrose, sweet pinks and pansies lived either side of the path. Her flowers! She had planted them and tended them all summer.

Her face wore a look of sadness as she turned away. Stepping through the gate however she chuckled and said, "Well, hold onto the critters, while I get into this contraption". This contraption was a hack, shiny and new, with a wide comfortable seat, and a fancy but durable top.

A span of young bay mares was hitched in front, prancing, tossing their heads and eager to be off. "We might as well take the lead", Dr. Robbins said, as one of the drivers handed him the lines, and he climbed in beside his wife, whom he had already assisted to her seat.

"We will probably be bringing up the rear, by the time we have reached the Missouri". The horses never hold out as the cattle do, on a long trip. "Right now the mares need the exercise". Put that pillow to your back and tuck the lap robe around you. It may be cool driving this forenoon, he said to his wife and then spoke to the mares.

"WESTWARD HO!", somebody shouted from the long line of wagons behind them. Down the long winding road toward the creek they drove. At their right were the fields of corn - ripe and ready for the harvest. At their left the groves of black walnut, and sugar maples, and the old sugar camp. How they would miss that. Nancy was thinking, and all their own sugar, syrup and molasses made at home.

The geese left the water as they neared the creek, waddling up the banks on the farther side, with much squawking and flapping of their wings.

Nancy watched them sadly, her geese, she had raised great flocks of them every year. She had made stacks of feathers in the loom house now!

( continued in next issue )

\* \* \* \* \*

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In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_ Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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/THE BULLETIN/

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DECATUR COUNTY

SUMMER ISSUE

Greensburg, Indiana

JULY 1993

OCCASION: Summer Meeting

PLACE: Westport Covered Bridge  
east of town.

DATE: Sunday, Aug. 29, 1993  
at 2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: John Barthold, president of the Historic Covered Bridge Society, will give a talk about & pictures of covered bridges of Indiana. Mr. Barthold is from Underwood, IN. Also, there will be the dedication of a bronze plaque designating that the Westport Covered Bridge is recorded on the National Register of Historic Places. Homemade ice cream & cookies will be served at Bob Conwell's home in Westport. Be sure and bring your sit ups. This will be a dandy meeting, don't miss it.

\* \* \* \* \*

LAST MEETING was held at the Presbyterian Church the afternoon of May 16th with a substantial group of the faithful present. They were entertained by a slide show & discussion of old postcards of Decatur County. This was organized and produced by Russell Wilhoit, a new member with the collecting of postcards as a hobby. An interesting & well done program, the Society thanks Russell for his time & trouble. If you have some old unneeded postcards, talk to Russell, he might take them off your hands. Refreshments were served by Marj Hunter who was in charge of the program.

\* \* \* \* \*

Subscriber, City-Why is the American flag called "Old Glory?"-The origin of the designation is attributed to Captain William Driver, of Salem, Mass. In 1824 his friends presented him a beautiful flag in honor of his elevation to the rank of master mariner. When he saw the emblem of his country he

(continued in next column)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Phillip Jackson, Jr.  
Phyllis Doerflinger  
Mark Bailey  
L. J. Taylor  
Wilbur Tressler

\* \* \* \* \*

Excerpt from letter to Decatur County Historical Society from Indiana Junior Historical Society.

"Dear Members; .....

.....Nancy Wolfe, Director"

Some 250 county students have been escorted through the County Museum by a group of hard working volunteers during the past 3 or 4 months.

I would like to take this opportunity to express sincere gratitude for your support of the Indiana Junior Historical Society through your generosity to your local chapter. Our sponsors and members work very hard to continually foster interest and enthusiasm for Indiana history. More importantly, they provide a catalyst to discover and research local history. Your efforts not only aid the chapter but prove to the members that history is important to many people and can be fun for all ages.

\* \* \* \* \*

(continued from first column)

exclaimed, "Old Glory." The term, however, did not become the popular poetic name for the flag until the civil war. After Driver retired from the sea he kept the flag, and on special occasions it was flown from a staff in front of his house at Nashville, Tenn., where he was living at the outbreak of the war. The state went with the confederacy, but Captain Driver remained loyal to the Union. He concealed his flag in a bed quilt, saying to his family and friends: "The

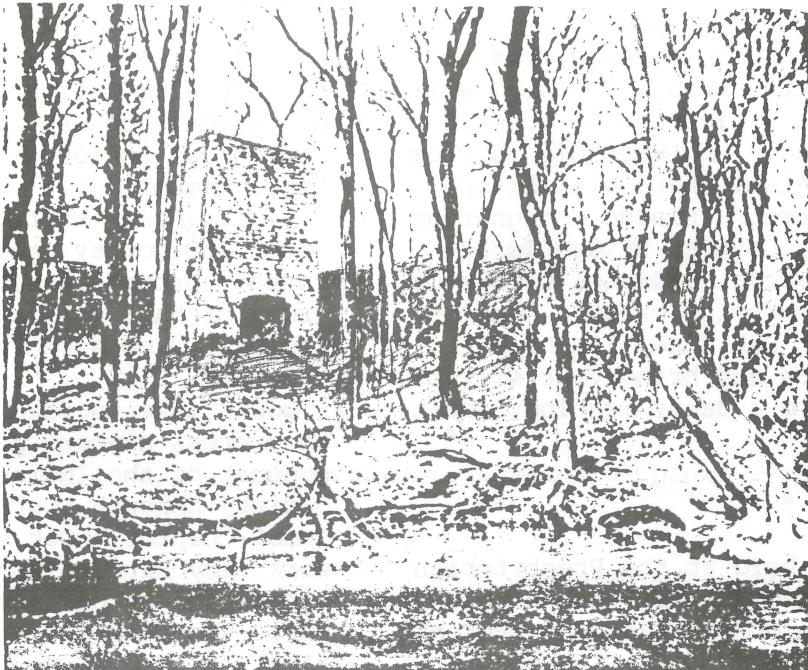
(continued on page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

north will save the Union and I will yet see Old Glory floating over the Statehouse in this city." In 1862, on the reoccupation of Nashville by the federal troops. Driver got out his flag and presented it to the commander, who ordered it flown from the top of the Capitol of Tennessee. This original Old Glory was presented to the National Museum at Washington in the administration of President Harding.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### THE OLD LIME KILN



This Lime Kiln still stands in Clay Township and is over 125 years old.

One of the pleasures of living in the country is investigating the surrounding country side. Traveling west out of Adams in Decatur County, Indiana, past the Hebron Cemetery, and left on a stone road along Clifty Creek about one half mile past the cemetery on the west bank of the creek sits the lime kiln on the farm now owned by Harold and Georgia Wilson.

The kiln was located in areas where the right combination of natural resources would be obtained. A good supply of stone and an abundant source of wood, some kilns consumed the equivalent of a half acre of wood in a day in the form of charcoal. They were built by a stream with sufficient flow to turn a waterwheel to operate a bellows or a blower and near a village or town where labor was available.

The kiln towering 25 feet high, consisting of an outer shell of stone with the inter lining of fire brick.

Charcoal was made by burning wood under carefully controlled conditions, in which only a limited amount of air is allowed and the wood is charred rather than

completely burned. The charcoal, an almost pure carbon fuel, aided by the air blast creates temperatures of 2000 to 2500 Fahrenheit to decompose the stone.

The quarried limestone is crushed and screened to pebble size and loaded in an opening in the top of the kiln. A ramp or a trestle usually was constructed to make loading easier.

Burnt lime hydrates when water is added and will harden like stone and is used for plaster, mortar and cement.

The Historical Atlas of Decatur County in 1882 states that 1,100 bushels of lime was burnt in Decatur County in 1880.

Part of the remains of another kiln can still be seen on the west edge of Milford.

John E. Parker 1991

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CONTINUED: GOODBYE INDIANA

She had left them for Margaret, cousin John's wife. They would be moving in tomorrow. She thought of the old loomhouse with it's big comfortable fireplace. It was there they had woven all their coverlets, bed spreads, table cloths and toweling, besides yards and yards of cloth, heavy and durable, for their every day work clothes. It was there they had spun all the yarn for knitting socks and stockings for the family. How would they ever manage without all of this, she couldn't even try to imagine.

Thus on the first day of their travels her thoughts kept turning back to the life she was leaving behind.

The three younger girls, Nancy, Zobeda and Halley (Mahala), had saddled and bridled their own mounts. This, their father had told them they would have to do, when he presented each of them with a brand new saddle, bridle and riding outfit.

The little mare Zobeda was to ride had been given to her only the evening before by her Uncle John Robbins. "Take her out and ride her, Zobeda", he said. "She is yours, and she will never throw you, nor hurt you, Zobeda". Her name is Julie. Julie proved the truth of his words in more than one instance. She leaped over ruts, crevises and badger-holes, as though she had been especially trained for the protection of her rider.

As the three girls rode away, Old Meg, the plough mare, thrust her head over the barn-gate and whinnied plaintively. She watched with mournful eyes, until they waved a good-bye and disappeared from view around the turn of the road. She was too old to stand the trip and would still be useful to cousin John in cultivating the long rows of corn.

It was with many misgivings, Dr. Robbins had said goodbye to his friends that morning. Grandmother Beasley, who had been a very good patient of his for many years cried as she took the hand he extended. "What will we do now, when we get sick?", she lamented. "We will just have to die, I suppose".

"Oh, no!", he assured her, laughing at her fears. "Just try not to get sick", but if you do just send for Dr. Bill. He will pull you through". "Maybe better than I could".

William Kirkpatrick, a life-long friend of his, had taken up the study of medicine, and to him he had given many of his books. When just a boy in his teens, Nathaniel Robbins had taken up the study of medicine. On Sunday afternoons, when the other boys were out playing ball or horse-shoe, he was at home studying. For years before leaving Indiana, his had been a familiar figure, riding or driving over the country-sides, visiting his patients and ministering to their needs. Amanda, the oldest daughter, who wasn't strong often accompanied him on the long drives and sometimes helped out as a nurse where she was needed. At the time he left Indiana, Nathaniel Robbins was owner of the largest medical libraries in the state. Nearly all of these books he gave away, intending to retire from the medical profession, upon reaching Oregon. In this, however, he failed; for in ministering to his own family, it was soon learned that he was a doctor and his services were sought far and wide over the country. In those early days doctors were as scarce as hens teeth.

Upon reaching Jerico, they were joined by Jake Robbins and his family, which then consisted of his wife Sarah and four boys, Harvey, Levi, Oliver and Martin. His outfit was a sizeable one, and when he joined his Uncle's party made a caravan of 28 wagons or more. Each of the Robbins boys, who were married, also the sons-in-law had their own outfits, consisting of three or four wagons. Jake or Jakie as he was then called, was a nephew of Nathaniel's. He worked for his uncle Nathaniel when only thirteen years of age. By the time he was fifteen, he had earned enough to buy a heifer and a filly. The filly was from a blooded Kentucky mare. From her he raised some valuable colts and sold them for a good price. He worked for his uncle until he was twenty, then bought a place of his own, built a cabin and planted an orchard. In the spring of 1833 he was married to Sarah Spillman. When a small boy Jake Robbins lived in the same neighborhood with Abraham Lincoln, also worked with him in later years. The Robbins family though not directly, was closely related with the Hanks family through the marriage of Elizabeth (Betty, a sister of Nancy Robbins), to William Hanks, who was a cousin to Abraham Lincoln. Uncle Billy and Aunt Betty Hanks, often visited with the family of Nathaniel Robbins.

As they neared Jerico they saw "Little Jake", and his family driving down the long lane from their home to join them on the main highway.

"Here they come", said Jim to his wife Minerva, "and here we are," just a pack of darn fool Robbins, starting out to explore the world. "And their poor meek, humble women trailin' after them" Minerva answered, a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, but looking very sober. Like all true pioneer women, she knew she would trail along with her man to the far corners of the earth, if he choose to go. Years later, Minerva, aged 90, in a reminiscent mood one day confided to me, that the first time she ever set eyes on Jim Robbins, was at a camp meeting back in Indiana. He was riding around on a big grey horse, with a watermelon under his arm. Riding up to a table, that was set underneath the sycamore trees, he laid the melon on it and proceeded to carve it.

"Now all you girls", he said, "range yourselves around this table, and you will get a slice of the best watermelon raised this year in Decatur County". "I know, because I raised it myself." "And remember, the prettiest girl gets the biggest slice of that melon." "I know I wasn't the prettiest girl, but I did get the biggest slice of melon," she said, a mischievous smile lighting her wrinkled face. "From that day on, I saw Jim Robbins most every Sunday afternoon."

They encountered very little rough road in traveling from Indiana to Missouri, and the trip was made in less time than they had expected. The most unpleasant part of that trip had been the heavy clouds of dust that followed them for days at a time. Along the main highways the dust was a foot deep in places.

Sol Bigsby, the oldest driver in the company, said "The women folks when they alighted from the wagons at night reminded him of a bunch of old setting hens shaking the dust out of their feathers".

After they reached the Missouri line, the fall rains set in, turning the dust in the roads into a lob-lolly of black sticky mud. "Missouri mud is the stickiest mud in the world." Old Sol warned them, "but it's a mighty fine place to live", he said. "I know, I was born there, and lived there fifty years of my life." The wagons on wheels sank to the hubs in the worst places and had to be pried out with rails and poles.

#### THE SACRIFICE

After spending this comfortable winter in Missouri, they were off to an early start in the spring. Ahead of them lay the treacherous mountain roads, the swollen streams they must ford, the alkali regions in Nebraska and the Indians. Whole companies of emigrants who had gone before had been massacred by Indians, and many had died of cholera. Also, they had to guard against the great herds of buffalo that roamed the plains. A stampede of these great animals meant certain annihilation, unless they succeeded in turning them. These animals furnished much of their meat, also their fuel, where wood was not to be had. Hunting buffalo was quite a sport for the men folks. When a young animal was killed, the tender juicy steaks were cooked in the dutch oven, furnishing a treat, greatly enjoyed by all.

It was when they reached the alkali regions in Nebraska, this pioneer family was called upon to make their great sacrifice. It was there the dreaded cholera, mercilessly and without warning took the lives of three of the daughters, Emmeline, Mehala and Amanda.

Stunned and bewildered by this terrible blow, the family set about making the best preparations they could for their burial. A huge box was fashioned from one of the wagon beds, and lined with soft white blankets, in this they laid them side by side. It was a bright sun shiny day, flowers bloomed all over the prairie and the birds were singing everywhere, while a sad and brief service was held and they were laid to rest beside the wagon trail.

Taking his grief-striken wife aside, Dr. Robbins said, "Nancy, I feel that I alone am to blame for all of this." "I am sorry we ever left our comfortable home in Indiana. Whatever we find, or whatever we may gain by going to the Oregon Country, it will never be worth the lives of three of our children."

It was a sad, disheartened party of emigrants, that turned the heads of their cattle westward once more and drove away that starlight night. The three girls, young and happy who only a few days before, had been the life of the party, expectantly looking forward to a life in the new country, were left behind, on that lonely prairie in Nebraska.

Two days later, Absolom Barnes, Emmerline's husband, succumbed to the dreaded malady. When he realized he could not recover he begged to be taken back where he could be laid to rest beside his wife. Not having the heart to refuse, Dr. Robbins agreed to his request. Afterwards, though, he realized he could not keep this promise without risking the lives of all the party, some of whom were already suffering from light attacks. Also, the cattle had refused to drink of the bad-tasting water. They were thirsty, and becoming restless and hard to manage. So Absolom Barnes, was laid to rest beside the trail, two days travel this side of the others.

Then followed long weeks of travel over the dusty plains. Clouds of yellow alkali dust, fanned by burning prairie winds, stung their hands and faces and the bad tasting alkali water, offered little relief to their parched throats.

#### THE FIRST STAMPEDE

At long last after, what had seemed like endless weary days, a streak of green timber appeared far off toward the western horizon. This meant fresh water for both man and beast. After a few more days of travel the cattle were becoming more and more restless and hard to control. At last the leaders, a pair of sleek young steers, raised their heads, sniffed a few breaths of the cool, damp air and decided to make a run for it. The others quickly followed, many of the wagons were overturned; some on their sides, and some completely. The one in which Zobeda was riding with the two little orphaned boys, Norval and William Barnes, was the one that turned completely over. They escaped however with only a few minor scratches and bruises. It was during this stampede that 17 year old Norval proved his metal. He ran in front of his cattle, whipped and lashed them about the heads and held them until they quieted down. His was the only team that was held back. Three year old Nancy Jane, daughter of James and Minerva, watched this performance from the back of her father's wagon. "Just look at Old Ginger, a twisting his tail", she cried, her eyes shining with the excitement. Ginger was the great brindle ox. It took several days to repair the wagons and get started again. The knowledge acquired by William Sharp, who had taken up wagon-making as a trade proved to be a great help to them at this troublesome time.

#### FORDING THE SOUTH PLATTE

They had reached a small creek or tributary of the Platte River. Scouting ahead some of the men had found a spring of clear sparkling water, the first good water they had had in days. The thirsty cattle drank from the creek, and after eating their fill of the fresh green grass, all around them lay down in the shade to rest. Every member of the train, drank of the good water. Then the great copper kettles were filled, and when the water was warmed, bathed their tired bodies. From that day on the ailing ones improved and there was no more cholera.

The next day was spent in doing up the family washings and it looked as though every bush and clump or green for half a mile around, was decorated with wearing apparel.

Dr. Robbins, William and James had gone scouting that morning, as far as Ogalalla where they were to ford the Platte River. This undertaking, was looked forward to with a great deal of apprehension by the women folks. Some of the emigrants who had gone before them had met with disaster. It was nearly a mile across at this place and although the water was shallow, the road-bed was narrow, with narrow, deep holes at the sides. Some of the cattle refused to enter the water and had to be whipped and goaded into the stream. Only one of the teams tried turning in mid-stream, the one Jim was driving. They turned half way and started down stream into deep water. "How he managed to get them turned back, he said he never just knew". Minerva said, "I was just petrified, couldn't move nor make a sound", and Jim said, "that helped a lot".

After crossing the Platte, their next thought was of the Indians. They began to meet up with small bands of the, but all were friendly. Late one evening while Nancy and Zobeda were cooking the supper over the camp-fire, hurrying to get everything done before darkness fell, a small band of them came riding up, stopped and dismounted. A tall powerful looking Indian wearing nothing except a breech cloth, walked

around and seemed to be sizing up the situation. Then he walked up to Zobeda, as though she was wearing something he wanted. As she stepped back he followed her. At last her temper was aroused, and doubling a fist, she struck him a hard blow on the chest. When his companions laughed he became highly insulted, making all sorts of faces and grimaces. Some of the men told her they thought it was some small pins she wore in her apron bib that he wanted. These were handed to him and he was greatly pleased. Then he was given two pair of old pants and an umbrella worn full of holes. He put on both pair of the pants fastening them in the back, then raised the umbrella above his head, and strutted off as proud as a peacock, furnishing a good laugh for everyone. When they reached Montana several more small bands were encountered, but all were friendly.

The Snake River in Idaho, was the river they crossed, not once, but many times. Like a huge reptile, winding itself back and forth, it extended the full length of the beautiful valley. Upon reaching the foot-hills of the great Rockies, they began to experience a feeling of being in a new and different country. The very air they breathed was different, more exhilarating. Strange new sounds were heard, the call of wild animals and birds. Late one evening, while the two girls were doing up the supper dishes, the older women sat around the camp-fire knitting and enjoying the fresh, cool air from the mountains. They were startled by an unusual hooting sound, that seemed close by at times, and far away at others. The hoot, hoot, hoot sounded at regular intervals, then would cease for a moment. I wonder if that could be one of those cougars, like they tell about out in Oregon country?" Jane said. "It makes cold shivers run down my spine, whatever it is, I think I'll go crawl in with the children."

James and William Robbins and William Sharp came riding up on their ponies and were quickly told about the uncanny sounds. After listening for a moment, William Sharp told them he thought the varmit was in the top of one of the trees, about a half mile away. "And I think he is a feathered varmit". "It was an old Hooter grouse.

( continued in next issue )

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